



# GOD OF CRIME

*Han Yeoul*

EPUB CREATION BY LISA HAYES

# God of Crime

(범죄의 신)

by

**Han Yeoul**

(한여울)

# Synopsis

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Seo Tae Hyuk, jailed after getting a false charge unfairly.

He will be executed without being able to prove his innocence.

When he opens his eyes, it's 15 years in the past?

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# Prologue

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“Aigoo, Your Majesty Seo Tae-hyuk. I apologize for bringing you to this humble place.”

Tae-hyuk narrowed his eyes and glared at the other person.

Son of a bitch.

He always called Tae-hyuk by that term.

It was a form of slang that inmates in a prison were called.

Those with a jail sentence of less than three years were called ‘commoners’, while those that received more than 10 years in prison were ‘nobles’. The prisoners with a life sentence were called ‘kings.’

Of course, the meaning didn’t indicate respect at all.

It was a very insulting nickname that was filled with scorn and ridicule.

“I see.”

Seo Tae-hyuk sat down in the chair in the middle of the room.

He was one of the few inmates who didn't feel helpless in front of the guards.

"Your Highness has nothing to say. Would you like the coffee that I have leftover?"

Tae-hyuk drank it all at once.

"Thank you."

"Kuk. Your Majesty. You are still as free as always. Has it already been 10 years? Tears are flooding my eyes at the thought of not being able to see you anymore."

"....."

"Yes yes. That day is here. It will happen in one week."

Tae-hyuk's eyes violently trembled.

A moan escaped from his tightly closed mouth. The last 10 years. He had thought that all his emotions had weathered away.

"Your claims of innocence have flown away. Your lawyer has run away. In the end..."

"It is like this."

The guard held out some documents.

“What is it?”

“Write down the meal that you would like to have on your last night. If you also have anyone you wish to visit then write it down as well.”

It was the so-called last dinner and last visit.

Tae-hyuk did nothing for one minute. However, his head was filled with thoughts of his life.

He slowly filled out the documents.

“Hoh. Kimchi stew. It is alright for you to choose a fancier meal.”

"This is my little brother's favourite food."

"Additionally, to not put any pork in? This is quite an unusual order. Surely you don't mean you were poor?... Oh, was I right?"

“.....”

“Haha. Yes, I see. You'll be busy for the time you have remaining. This will be the first death penalty in 30 years so please excuse

anyone if they are inexperienced.”

Tae-hyuk didn't move from his spot for a while.

Falsely accused.

He was falsely accused and imprisoned. Now, he was doing to die without seeing anything.

The guard had a strange thought that he found amusing.

"Ah. I thought of something. Isn't a criminal who receives a life sentence called the king of crime? Then what should I call a criminal who is going to be executed? Perhaps, a god? Haha! In a week's time, Your Majesty Seo Tae-hyuk will become the God of Crime!"

In the room where the guard had left him, Tae-hyuk furiously roared for a while.

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One week passed by quickly.

It seemed that his name appeared on TV more than the celebrities.

The death penalty system had been just revived after 30 years, so



it couldn't be helped that the nation was interested.

Human rights organizations protested outside the prison every day but it didn't change a thing.

Tae-hyuk sat in a chair in the visitation room.

His mind calmed down after he had accepted his death. He was waiting for his younger brother and older sister, who he had asked to visit. It had already been over a year since he last saw them.

What would they talk about? He wanted to thank his younger brother for believing that he was innocent until the end.

Did his sister, who took over as a mother when their parents died when he was a child, live happily ever after?

Tae-hyuk looked at the clock on the wall. The kimchi stew on the table was already cold.

Thump.

Tae-hyuk tried to make his expression as casual as possible as he heard the door opening.

“.....”

Tae-hyuk forgot what he was going to say when he saw the person who came in.

"Aigoo, Your Majesty. I'm not the one you have been waiting for. I'm truly sorry."

It was the familiar guard.

He sat down on a chair in the visitation room.

"You look very uncomfortable at my appearance."

Tae-hyuk didn't deny it.

"Your family. Was it Seo Tae-min ssi and Seo Ha-ran? You won't be able to see the both of them."

"Is that so?"

Had they decided to give up everything?

He didn't mind that he wouldn't be able to see his family in his last minutes.

'Thank you for treating me as family, even though I was unable to get rid of the false accusations.' He only wanted to say those words.

Yes.

This was what happened..

It would be best if they saw Seo Tae-hyuk as someone who never existed in the first place.

Then he would pray that his remaining family would live on happily. He decided to be satisfied with this thought.

Then the guard smirked.

“Seo Ha-ran ssi, Your Majesty’s older sister, Seo Ha-ran, committed suicide last month.”

“Huh?”

“Is this surprising? No, not really. She had a murderer in her family, of which the media talked about every day. Reporters kept bothering the family. Then, by chance, the mosaic covering her face didn’t work properly, and was revealed to her workplace. Oh dear, oh dear. In the end, she was fired. Furthermore, I was told that she had quite a large debt. She eventually lost her remaining assets in a multi-level marketing scheme. Thus, in the end...”

Kek kek!

The guard pretended to strangle himself.

"T-that is ridiculous!" Why would Noonim do that?"

"Anyways, what happened to your younger brother? Seo Tae-min ssi was it? He was truly smart, unlike a certain someone. Didn't he enter S Law University to save his hyung? He was then caught looking for evidence from politicians and large corporations. Not long after, he disappeared. I guess he thought he was a detective. He should have known not to overrate himself."

"....."

"My guess it that he is encased in concrete in a barrel drum at the bottom of the Yellow Sea. He should be getting friendly with his new neighbours. Well, what is the exact location of the Dragon King?"

Kwang!

Tae-hyuk struck the table with his fist.

The prepared kimchi stew was strewn about, and the room became a mess.

"Don't lie to me, you bastard! Are you completely crazy? What? My sister committed suicide after losing everything in a pyramid scheme? Don't take me for a fool! And Tae-min went missing after trying to save me? Don't play around! I will kill you!"

The guard held his side as he laughed.

“Hahaha! Your Majesty Seo Tae-hyuk. What, you will kill me? You, who has never even killed a single ant in your life?”

It was the right answer.

At that moment, Tae-hyuk thought it was strange.

Until now, he thought that this was the guard that he had known for 10 years; however, that was not the case. There was no such guard here. In the first place, there was no way a prison guard could know that much. Why did he ever think that the person before was a prison guard?

"... You. You aren't a guard."

“Yes. Then what am I?”

The guard laughed.

Tae-hyuk, who saw the man's face, screamed.

"Aaaaack!"

In the sockets where one's eyeballs were supposed to be was

replaced by a hollow space.

The mouth was ripped from ear to ear and something red dribbled down his chin whenever he laughed.

The thing smiled and said.

"I have a very mouth-watering proposal. Would you like to hear it first?"

# Chapter 1 - I Don't Think It Is A Dream

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“Keok!”

Tae-hyuk woke up screaming.

It was a bad dream.

This happened sometimes. Sometimes there were dreams so real that he couldn't even distinguish between the dream and reality for a while after waking up.

"Well, that was a shit dream."

In his dream, Tae-hyuk was a falsely accused criminal who received the death penalty.

"Fuck."

Just thinking about it caused him to curse.

Tae-hyuk sat on his bed and didn't move for a while.

“...Wait a minute. So I was locked up for 10 years for a murder I didn't commit? In the end, I was sentenced to death.”

Tae-hyuk certainly didn't kill anyone. However, the evidence

was perfect. There was the CCTV taken at the crime scene. The weapon with Tae-hyuk's fingerprints on them. An eyewitness also saw him escaping the crime scene.

"This, damn!"

His body started shaking.

"Wait a minute. It is just a dream. Just think of it as a shit dream..."

But something was wrong. It was too real to be a dream. It felt like he really had been confined in prison as a death row inmate until yesterday.

If it was a dream then who was he now?

Tae-hyuk looked around.

It was a three pyeong room with a bunk bed and two desks. There was also a small bookcase with a simple structure.

The unique dampness and mouldy smell was still the same.

It was the room he shared with his brother Tae-min before he graduated from high school.



‘What? It feels like I’m reminiscing about a memory that is more than 10 years old. Crazy. This is all due to that realistic dream.’

15 years had passed by in his dream.

But in reality, only a single night had passed. Then what was this sense of incongruity?

"Anyway, I am still a high school student, right? Not a death row inmate?"

Tae-hyuk calmed his chaotic mind and wanted to check.

"Yes, a mirror!"

Tae-hyuk mindlessly searched the room for a mirror. He would resolve things after confirming his appearance.

If he didn’t look like a high school student but a man in his 30s... Just thinking about it caused him to have goosebumps.

Eventually, he was able to find a small handheld mirror.

“Ugh. A bad taste.”

The demon carved on the mirror gave off a bad feeling.

"Did we ever have a mirror like this?"

It might belong to his younger brother.

The place where he found it was in the bookshelf used by both of them.

"... Phew. Fortunately, I'm still a high school student."

The man in the mirror seemed to be in his late teens.

"Wait a minute. What is this?"

Tae-hyuk looked around with a strange expression. However, there was nothing.

He looked at the mirror again.

There were a lot of strange letters on it.

[Seo Tae-hyuk]

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-Title: God of Crime

-Rating: Commoner (Lacking conditions for upgrade)

In addition to this, a status window filled the mirror.

Tae-hyuk laughed to himself.

"This is a well made toy."

The contents were commonly seen in popular online games.

A person who liked things like this.

Inside the house, there was only Tae-min.

Either way, he was indeed a high school student.

Tae-hyuk sighed with relief.

He wasn't a falsely accused death row prisoner. He was Seo Tae-hyuk, a high school student in the 2nd grade who lived with his older sister and younger brother. Then he started to remember some things.

Unlike his brother, who was a good student, he had a slightly delinquent appearance.

He sometimes missed school and he couldn't exactly say that his grades were good.

Thus, he was treated as a troublemaker.

Still, at least he wasn't a high school gangster.

"Um. Has Tae-min already left?"

He could smell the scent of rice cooking from somewhere. It seemed that his sister, Seo Ha-ran, was preparing breakfast. He started to realize that he was hungry.

"Tae-hyuk! Come eat!"

His sister's voice was heard.

Tae-hyuk scratched his head and headed towards the kitchen.

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“.....”

Tae-hyuk's eyes turned red.

Ha-ran asked with surprise.

"What is it? Did you have a scary dream or something?"

Tae-min, who was sitting opposite to Tae-hyun, stared at him before shifting his gaze back to the English words in the book before him.

There wasn't much time remaining for his exam, so even the preparation time while eating was precious.

"Dust entered my eyes."

The menu for breakfast was kimchi stew. There was only a little bit of tofu, and didn't contain a single piece of meat.

Ha-ran hesitated before saying.

"... I'm sorry, Noona will cook you one with meat when I get paid."

"It really is because dust entered my eyes. Also, Noona's kimchi stew really is the best in the world, so delicious that I would want to eat it before I die."

It was a sincere statement.

He put a spoonful into his mouth and could taste his sister's kimchi stew.

It was a dish that he couldn't eat in his dream, after all.

"Oh my, this child. You'll be late. Eat quickly."

Ha-ran laughed as she moved her spoon. She didn't dislike Tae-hyuk's praise.

Their parents had both died in an accident, so Ha-ran became the sole guardian of Tae-hyuk and Tae-min. Despite being a flower in her early 20s, she was working double shifts at the factory.

She didn't wear any makeup but to Tae-hyun, she was more beautiful than anyone else in the world.

Tae-hyuk bit his lip.

'I'll have to get a job straight after graduating high school so I can help Noona.'

Then he was startled.

A memory from his dream of being a death row prisoner popped up.

'I graduated from school. I obtained a job with a private security company because I had nothing useful, save my body. And I worked there for two years. Then...'

He was framed and went to jail.

‘No! It's a dream, a dream! Damn...!’

Tae-hyuk turned on the TV to shake off the memories of the death row prisoner.

-The prosecution is looking for the whereabouts of Yoo Cheol-ho, a prisoner who escaped from Central Prison on the 9th...

Ha-ran shook her head and made a fuss as the news of a horrible criminal was heard.

“Omo. He still isn’t caught. It was said that he might be near here. Tae-hyuk, if you go outside, then only go when it is still light. If someone goes up to you then don’t follow them. Do you understand?”

“Noona. I’m grown up. And why don’t you say something to Tae-min?”

"Tae-min is steady."

"Then I'm bad?"

"Ohuhut!"

Tae-hyuk and Tae-min were already high school students, but Ha-ran still viewed them as children.

Tae-hyuk smiled at his sister's worry and nodded.

“By the way. That person still hasn't been caught? He was clearly caught...”

Yoo Cheol-ho. A familiar name.

He had stayed in the room next to Tae-hyuk's for a while.

In other words, a neighbour.

‘Of course, that was just in my dream.’

Tae-hyuk knew why he had such a dream. It was because he kept hearing these things in the news every day.

"Hyung. Did you eat something bad? Yoo Cheol-ho was caught after committing seven murders three months ago, and broke out of prison just last week. So he hasn't been caught."

Tae-min, who was eating rice quietly, interrupted.

Tae-hyuk frowned. Tae-min was interested in such things. This time, he was wrong.



For sure...

"What are you talking about? Yoo Cheol-ho escaped for six months and was caught after committing three more murders."

Tae-min sighed and said.

"Phew, Hyung. Don't just read manhwa. You should watch the news as well. Yoo Cheol-ho was caught? They are completely clueless. There is also a pretty good reward.. You must have dreamt about catching him."

Wait a minute.

Didn't Yoo Cheol-ho clearly get caught after his escape?

He was a complete psycho and quite talkative.

Furthermore, he didn't sleep so he talked about his story until dawn.

After two successful breakouts, he gained the nickname 'King of Jailbreaks.' The place he went and how he escaped were all vivid in Tae-hyuk's head.

"So Yoo Cheol-ho's nickname isn't King of Jailbreaks?"

Tae-min moved his index finger to the side of his head and moved it round and round.

"Hey. That isn't something you should do to your hyung!"

"Ah. It's already 8 o'clock. You should hurry if you don't want to be late. The student manager said he would break your legs with a paddle if you are late again."

Tae-min got up and ran to his room.

'Indeed, a terrible dream.'

Not even the Pirate King but the King of Jailbreaks.

"If the dream is correct then Yoo Cheol-ho's accomplice should be caught in S City by now. But he isn't."

Tae-hyuk unwittingly said the thought that came to his head.

"You must be half-asleep."

Ha-ran laughed.

A few minutes passed.

"T-Tae-hyuk."

Ha-ran, who was eating while watching the news, starting shivering like she had seen a ghost.

"Huh?"

"... You were just talking about Yoo Cheol-ho's accomplice right?"

"Yes. Why?"

"L-look at that."

Ha-ran pointed to the TV with a trembling hand.

-Breaking news. The accomplice to Yoo Cheol-ho's escape was caught in S City.

Tae-hyuk's mouth gaped open. He was so surprised that he didn't notice the falling spoon.

'Wait. What is this? What is this?'

The content of the news was the same as his dream. The evidence was the same as Yoo Cheol-ho's first escape.

'A dream. It's a dream! Then why is it happening in real life?'

"... Noona. Is that a rerun? This actually happened yesterday, or the day before, right?"

"That... a live broadcast..."

The words stabbed at Tae-hyuk's chest like a dagger.

It was a dream, so what was this?

A foresight dream? Returning to the past? Or was it just a coincidence?

Ha-ran gazed at Tae-hyuk with worried eyes.

Tae-hyuk tried to look bright.

"Haha! I just said it. It came true by chance. Maybe I should go and buy a lottery ticket?"

"Hey ~ you really scared me."

"I have to go to school. Doesn't Noona come home late at night? You should be careful at night."

"Prince-nim doesn't have to worry, I'll be careful. Have fun at

school.”

“Yes, Noona.”

Tae-hyuk left the house with his bag.

His laughter instantly disappeared from his face.

According to his dream, Yoo Cheol-ho shouldn't be far from here.

‘I need to confirm if Yoo Cheol-ho is really there. Only then will I know if that was just a dream.’

He felt sorry for his sister but he wouldn't be able to go to school.

## Chapter 2 - I Don't Think It Is A Dream #2

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Yoo Cheol-ho's actions after his accomplice was caught were simple. It was the same as fox hunting, if a fox's cave was lit on fire, then it would fall prey to the hunters waiting outside.

If there was a definite hideout, it was better to keep hiding there.

'The place where Yoo Cheol-ho is located is 20 bus stops away.'

A serial killer that had the whole nation in an uproar was in such close proximity.

Tae-hyuk pulled out the wallet from his pocket and checked its contents.

'Um. It have about 3,000 won in total.'

It was said that a man should always have 3,000 won on him. He had no idea that would be true.

It was only enough for a round-trip bus fare. Furthermore, if he used up all of it then he would have to starve for lunch.

'If I had known that then I would have eaten more for breakfast.'

He hadn't even eaten half a bowl of stew due to thinking about Yoo Cheol-ho.

It was like in the military or the prison. It was an unspoken law that those who left food behind would soon regret it.

'Damn. This is just like a real criminal.'

It was within walking distance but Tae-hyuk decided to take the bus. It was noticeable if a student wearing a uniform was walking the streets during class time. Due to his delinquent looks, he was often picked up by police officers on patrol and lectured.

Every time Ha-ran was contacted, he would have to see her in tears.

'Indeed, I should take the bus.'

What did he want to do when he met Yoo Cheol-ho?

Tae-hyuk's mind became complicated.

What if Yoo Cheol-ho was really at the location where he was going now? Then it would be proof that what he thought was a dream actually wasn't.

Then...

Would he really go to jail in five years after being falsely accused?

As a result those events, his older sister Seo Ha-ran and younger brother Seo Tae-min would be ruined.

‘Fuck. It is like hearing that I have a terminal illness...’

However, it was better to know and be prepared than to be ignorant.

Tae-hyuk got on the bus towards his destination.

He pulled his baseball cap deep over his face, just in case he saw a face that he knew.

‘Um. It is past the time to go to work so there aren’t many people on the bus.’

There was only an old lady and a man with a baseball cap positioned like Tae-hyuk’s.

He had bumped into the man when he got on the bus.

But there was something suspicious about him.

‘It is so empty in here, so why is he sitting next to someone?’

Tae-hyuk, who had sat in an empty seat, turned and closely



observed the two of them.

It was at that moment.

Brr!

There was a vibration from between his crotch.

Tae-hyuk looked around with surprise.

'Fuck... If anyone saw that then they would think I was a pervert.'

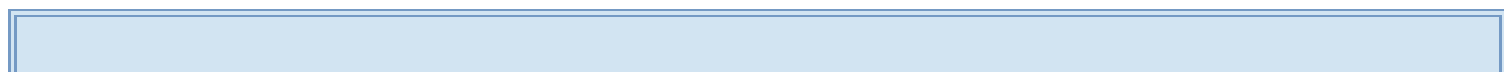
There was something in the pocket of his school uniform that was vibrating.

'Uh, is it a mirror? Why is it in the pocket of my uniform?'

It was the mirror that he used to look at himself this morning. The demon carved on the outside still looked really ominous.

Tae-hyuk squinted and looked at the mirror..

His face was reflected but there were still some strange letters written.



[Crime Skill: Robbery has been acquired.]

-You can acquire one random item when bumping against another person.

-The probability of success depends on your dexterity.

The letters came and then disappeared.

Tae-hyuk's mouth trembled.

‘What is this...?’

At the same time, new letters emerged above his head.

[Seo Tae-hyuk]

-Title: God of Crime

-Rating: Commoner (Lacking conditions for upgrade)

-Skills Possessed: Robbery (Lv 1)

'Did I learn the Robbery skill just now? Why? WHY?!'

Tae-hyuk realized that the demon mirror wasn't an ordinary item.

In the first place, he had clearly left this on Tae-min's desk, yet it somehow ended up in his pocket.

He thought that the demon looked like a true dick. A really dick-like thing.

Anyway, if the words on the demon mirror were true, then he had just learnt a crime skill.

Tae-hyuk looked around.

It wasn't difficult to find the reason.

'If there is a result, then there needs to be a cause.'

After Tae-hyuk's arrival on the bus, the old lady started to snore as she dozed off.

The man sitting next to her then revealed his true colours.

'Pickpocket!'

The man used careful hand techniques to prevent the old lady

from waking up. He easily opened the locked handbag using a razor, and all he took out was a wallet.

If Tae-hyuk hadn't known that something was going to happen beforehand, then he would have thought the man's body had moved because the bus was shaking.

That's how perfect the man's skill was.

Tae-hyuk wouldn't have noticed if he hadn't seen the word 'robbery' on the demon mirror.

'What on earth is this mirror?'

Tae-hyuk chewed on his lips.

Was it truly a mirror that had a demon dwelling inside it?

The pickpocket tried to get off the bus before Tae-hyuk could calm his confused mind.

Duk!

The pickpocket was rushing like he could feel a gaze on him.

Then Tae-hyeok's body was lightly bumped.

Once again, the demon mirror vibrated.

Brr!

Tae-hyuk made a crazy expression and looked at the mirror.

[Robbery has been used.]

-You have succeeded in stealing the opponent's belongings!

“.....”

The pickpocket had already escaped the bus.

‘Robbery?’

According to the message in the mirror, he had stolen something from the pickpocket.

Tae-hyuk bit his lip.

‘I should check to see what I stole first.’

Tae-hyuk searched through his pockets before a long wallet that he hadn't seen before emerged.

'Oh my god!'

It was as he had thought. The pickpocket had stolen the old lady's wallet then it was stolen again.

In this situation, the one accused of being the criminal would be him.

Tae-hyuk hurriedly got off the bus.

The the old lady's scream rang through the bus.

“Omo! My wallet is gone!”

Tae-hyuk's eyes shook.

There was no time. Tae-hyuk ran through the alleys.

‘Crazy...’

A pickpocket stole the old lady's wallet.

And the pickpocket had the wallet stolen by Tae-hyuk.

If Tae-hyuk had been a little late getting off the bus then he

would have been arrested by the police officer on duty.

‘What? God of Crime? Trying to make a good person a criminal!’

Tae-hyuk angrily threw the demon mirror with all his strength towards the ground.

Jjeok!

‘Wah...’

Rather than the fragile mirror breaking, the cement ground was the one that cracked.

This time he stepped on it.

“Uaack!”

It hurt like he had kicked a stone pillar. Tae-hyuk spat out curses and threw the demon mirror into a trash bin.

He then turned his body and left this place.

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Tae-hyuk was worried about what to do with the old lady’s wallet.

It seemed like he was becoming a criminal without his consent.

‘Just like those guys.’

In his dream, Tae-hyuk had been imprisoned for 10 years. Unless he was in solitary confinement, it was impossible not to meet other criminals.

There were even those criminals convicted of atrocities.

Yoo Cheol-ho was one of those people.

They were monsters in a human guise.

Now, he wasn't too sure that it was a dream. At any rate, he was a falsely accused death row inmate in his dream.

For 10 years, he had struggled to escape from that place. It had been a really painful, long time.

Would it have been easier if he knew that he had been postponing death for 10 years?

So if he became a criminal here, it would be like denying his very existence.



‘I need to find its owner’

But how?

He could go to the police station and give them the wallet. They would thank him for surrendering, and then they would handcuff him.

‘Well. It is best to just put it in the mailbox.’

Inside the wallet were 20 checkbooks worth 100,000 won each and ten 50,000 won bills. The total was 2.5 million won.

There was also identification. He would definitely put it in the mailbox that belonged to the owner.

‘She is richer than I thought.’

His heart shook at the tidy sum. It was enough to buy some new clothes for his troubled sister.

‘...Seo Tae-hyuk. What are you thinking? I don’t think that Noona would like that.’

Tae-hyuk pulled a 50,000 won bill from the wallet.

This was lost property, so to speak. If he returned it to the owner,

then 10% was his.

Then he put the wallet in the mailbox.

'I can buy [samgyeopsal](#) and grill it with Noona.'

He thought as he placed the money in his pocket.

He froze in shock.

'Crazy...'

It was the demon mirror that he had obviously tossed in the bin.

## Chapter 3 - I Don't Think It Is A Dream #3

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Tae-hyuk eventually gave up on getting rid of the mirror. It kept returning to his pocket, yet it wasn't a possessed doll.

It just informed him of the situation through messages and vibrations. It didn't like seem like it would do him any harm.

'I guess I should go visit a shaman later.'

He put aside the mirror for now, and decided to think about Yoo Cheol-ho first.

'Wasn't Yoo Cheol-ho hiding in an empty church?'

If he had a smartphone, then he would search with a map app service. However, Tae-hyuk currently only had the flip phone that his sister had given him.

He had no choice but to go to a nearby PC room to search online.

Despite the fact that it was currently class time, the PC room was still crowded with people.

He noticed a few students in their uniforms.

'They are also playing hooky.'

Tae-hyuk paid the fee at the counter, then sat down and turned on the computer.

'The location of the church... Crazy. There are more than 20?'

The good news was that he knew that it was an empty church. Tae-hyuk called the churches one by one to check.

After a few minutes, he was able to get the information that he wanted.

'There were two churches that didn't answer the phone. He is certainly in one of them!'

Tae-hyuk moved in a hurry.

The first place he went to wasn't correct. If that was true, then Yoo Cheol-ho was definitely at the second location.

'Bingo...!'

The curtains were firmly closed over each window. However, he felt a strange presence inside.

The whole alley was half empty due to redevelopment. The church where Yoo Cheol-ho was hiding also seemed to be ruined.

'Certainly, no one would ever imagine that an escaped prisoner would be hiding in a run down church.'

First of all, he had to confirm that Yoo Cheol-ho was inside.

'How can I talk to him?'

He couldn't knock on the door and ask for Yoo Cheol-ho ssi. It just wasn't possible.

At that moment, he came up with a good idea.

Tae-hyuk got the address of the church from the mailbox and headed to a Chinese restaurant that was nearby.

It was a place where he used to do deliveries when skipping school.

It was lunch time. The phone was ringing, but the delivery motorcycles weren't visible.

'As expected, they are swamped with orders.'

Tae-hyuk called the Chinese restaurant.

He made an order for jajangmyeon and gave the address of the

church. He also made sure to sound annoyed at the fact that the restaurant was swamped with orders, and that the delivery would be delayed.

"Uh, is it Tae-hyuk? Did you come for a job again? Well, that is good, as there are a lot of deliveries."

The boss greeted Tae-hyuk as he opened the door to the Chinese restaurant.

"Nope. I'm here to eat jajangmyeon."

"Aye, don't be like that. I'm unbelievably busy right now, please, just do 10! It is urgent so I'll give you an hourly wage of 10,000 won.'

Tae-hyuk smiled pleasantly.

"Then I'll do it for just one hour."

"Call!"

Tae-hyuk changed into his work clothes and picked up the iron boxes containing the deliveries.

'Let's do a test.'

He decided to test if the Robbery skill he just learnt could also be used against the public.

As he passed the boss sitting at the counter, Tae-hyuk bumped against his body.

Then the crime skill was activated normally.

[Robbery has been used.]

-You have succeeded in stealing the opponent's belongings!

'What did I steal?'

Tae-hyuk put his hand in his pocket and pulled out a strange bundle of hair.

'What is this?'

He looked at the boss and saw that his rich head of hair was gone.

'Boss-nim... Isn't he obviously in his 30s?'

Tae-hyuk's eyes flashed.

"This fell here."

"Ack! When was this stripped off? T-Tae-hyuk... Don't tell anybody about this. I'll add another 5,000 won to your hourly wage."

The two men exchanged conspiratorial glances.

---

"Your [Jajangmyeon](#) has arrived!"

Tae-hyuk knocked on the firmly locked door and shouted.

There was no reaction from inside the church. He started using more strength to knock on the door.

There was still no reaction, so Tae-hyuk started shouting.

"Aish! Delivery! Please come out quickly!"

In the end, the person couldn't bear it.

The closed curtain opened a little bit. The person inside was checking to see if it really was a genuine Chinese delivery person outside.



The iron door opened, revealing a man in clergy attire that could be seen from within the shadows.

“I never ordered any jajangmyeon.”

"Aish! It's right here."

"Well. I happen to be hungry. How much is it?"

The man opened the door a bit wider and slowly came out.

Tae-hyuk nearly dropped the iron box he was carrying.

‘Yoo Cheol-ho...!’

A murderer who killed seven people.

It was him.

‘He has a beard now, and is also in clergy attire, but it is definitely him!’

Tae-hyuk's clothes became damp with sweat.

The fact that Yoo Cheol-ho was here was evidence that what Tae-hyuk saw wasn't a simple dream.

Then...

‘Crazy. Then, in the next five years, I will be framed and taken to prison? Fuck off!’

Wait a minute.

Something suddenly popped into Tae-hyuk’s head. It was different from the time when he was framed without knowing anything.

Right now, Tae-hyuk knew what would happen in the next 15 years.

And...

‘I don’t know precisely what this power is, but there is also the mirror.’

Due to the power of the mirror, he was able to learn the Robbery skill from the pickpocket.

If that was so, then couldn’t other things be learned?

Perhaps Tae-hyuk could change the harsh reality that he remembered.

'First of all, I have to find out how to learn skills.'

Tae-hyuk remembered when he first learnt Robbery.

He ran into the pickpocket as he got on the bus, and got the Robbery skill.

Shortly afterwards, he witnessed the pickpocket stealing the old lady's wallet.

The condition required would be one of them.

"My body feels a bit uncomfortable. Can you come in and put the food on the floor?"

Yoo Cheol-ho said with a smile.

Tae-hyuk looked at his eyes, and saw the eyes of a beast determined to kill.

'I cannot relax for even a second!'

If he did something even slightly suspicious, then he would surely be killed by Yoo Cheol-ho.

Tae-hyuk recalled the three murders after Yoo Cheol-ho escaped.

He suspected that they had noticed his identity and stabbed them dozens of times with a knife.

Yoo Cheol-ho was very quick.

Tae-hyuk wouldn't be able to get away if he tried to escape.

Then...

He had to perfectly pretend to be a Chinese delivery person.

Tae-hyuk told Yoo Cheol-ho with a casual expression.

“It is 5,000 won.”

“Wait a minute. Money...”

There were no signs that Yoo Cheol-ho doubted Tae-hyuk's identity.

Tae-hyuk smiled pleasantly.

‘It was good that I came in the disguise of a Chinese deliveryman.

People always let down their guard when they deal with people

like couriers and delivery men.

Tae-hyuk remembered that Yoo Cheol-ho was previously arrested after being reported by a pizza delivery person.

“Yes, the money is here.”

Yoo Cheol-ho pulled out a 10,000 won bill from his pocket.

Tae-hyuk accepted it and gave back the change.

“We’re currently swamped with deliveries, so I will come back later to pick up the bowl after an hour.”

And the door closed.

Tae-hyuk sighed with relief.

He had safely escaped from the clutches of a crazy killer.

“Try to enjoy it, as it will be your last meal in society.”

Tae-hyuk laughed.

If he had known this before, then he would have also given Yoo Cheol-ho some [tangsuyuk](#).

## Chapter 4 - I Don't Think It Is A Dream #4

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'It seems that I can't learn skills just from touching another person's body.'

Tae-hyuk had deliberately touched Yoo Cheol-ho's hand as he was giving him the money.

However, there was no reaction from the mirror.

'Then what is it?'

Surely it wasn't just the Robbery skill?

There was just too much that he didn't know.

'Let's just think about Yoo Cheol-ho first.'

It was impossible for him to catch the killer directly. He didn't even know the success rate of Robbery, so it was suicidal to act while believing in it.

Then there was only one thing left.

The prosecutors assured that they would be able to catch Yoo Cheol-ho tomorrow; however, according to Tae-hyuk's dream, Yoo Cheol-ho would start fleeing across the country for more than a month.

Within that time period, three innocent civilians would be killed.

The most important thing was for Tae-hyun to deviate from the predetermined date.

If Yoo Cheol-ho were caught today... then the three victims that were supposed to die would be saved in the end.

He hoped that he could change the future.

Tae-hyuk hurried into action.

‘Yes. I will call a reliable detective.’

Tae-hyuk thought about who to contact while searching through his pockets.

He then pulled out his handphone to make a call.

‘... There is no more battery.’

It was an old-fashioned flip phone that he inherited from his sister. Even if he charged it every day, it was still a junk phone that would quickly run out of power.

Tae-hyuk went to a nearby convenience store and charged his

handphone. A few minutes would be enough to make one call.

The TV in the store was showing news about Yoo Cheol-ho.

-Finally, there is a reward of 50 million won. However, his location is still unknown.

‘Bounty!’

Tae-hyuk almost fell backwards at that word.

‘Why didn't I think of it before? He is an escaped prisoner, so naturally there will be a reward!’

Come to think of it, his brother had said something similar this morning.

At first, this was simply to check if he was in a dream or not.

Then he suddenly learned a strange crime skill - but this fact wasn't too important.

'50 million won...'

It was an amount that allowed him to not only buy clothes for his hard-working sister, but also allowed them to get out of the monthly rented semi-basement room.



The person he called would be someone who would obtain a huge merit. Therefore, he wanted to give it to someone he knew.

‘Yes. I will call Cho Kang-suk hyung.’

He was a crime squad investigator who had questioned Tae-hyuk several times in the past. He was one of the few people who treated Tae-hyuk as a human instead of a death row inmate.

His promotion luck was quite bad, despite have a vibrant sense of justice, so he was still in the field despite being in his late 40s.

‘He should be roughly in his 30s right now.’

After confirming that the battery was charged to a certain extent, Tae-hyuk pressed a number.

-This is the Gang-dong police station.

"I wish to speak to Detective Cho Kang-suk."

-Yes, I understand.

There was a moment of silence before Cho Kang-suk's voice was heard.

-Yes, the phone has been changed. I am Cho Kang-suk of the Gang-dong police station's 2nd team.

"Will I really get a reward if I catch Yoo Cheol-ho?"

Tae-hyuk asked directly.

-It has to be directly. Or can it just be a crucial tip that leads to the arrest... Hey, are you a high school student? Why are you making a prank call? If I catch you then I'll be angry!

It was a reaction that Tae-hyuk had expected from Cho Kang-suk.

He was more like a neighbourhood hyung than a detective.

"It is real. But is it in cash? What are the tax percentages?"

-Hyung is busy so I'm hanging up.

"It is definitely Yoo Cheol-ho. Isn't this a situation where you have to find every grain of rice that Yoo Cheol-ho shed while eating? How about just checking it out?"

-I will do it. I hope it is real or I will one punch you so hard that three teeth will be knocked out.

"Yes."

-How did you even see him?

"I made a delivery."

-Even an escaped prisoner has to eat.

Tae-hyuk smiled widely.

Despite his crude way of speaking, Cho Kang-suk was a thorough detective. He would check any minor clue directly.

Tae-hyuk told Kang-suk his location.

---

"Fuck. It is real. To think that he was hiding in this type of place. Son of a bitch."

He used the walkie-talkie, requesting that reinforcements be sent from the investigation headquarters.

"I found where he is hiding. Location..."

Kang-suk patted Tae-hyuk's head.

"Sorry for doubting you."

“No problem. Please be sure to catch him.”

“Then. Watch as I catch him.”

Tae-hyuk licked the ice cream Kang-suk bought him and watched the arrest operation.

The rest happened quickly.

The investigation had been in trouble because there were no witnesses to report the location. But now they knew exactly where he was hiding.

Cho Kang-suk acted quickly.

After contacting the special investigation headquarters, dozens of police cars arrived.

Tae-hyuk watched in interest as they broke through the door of the building.

Yoo Cheol-ho took off the clothes that he was wearing and started to run away quickly.

Cho Kang-suk threw himself onto Yoo Cheol-ho, like a hawk hunting its prey.

Yoo Cheol-ho was handcuffed and started screaming.

“Fuck! Which son of a bitch knew I was here? Tell me! I’ll bite off the flesh on their bones!”

Yoo Cheol-ho was taken away by five police officers while still furiously struggling.

Tae-hyuk just watched as he put the last bit of ice cream in his mouth..

"Ah, cool!"

It was sweet and delicious.

After Yoo Cheol-ho was dragged out, the police entered the church to find any remaining evidence.

Cho Kang-suk continued walking around with a walkie-talkie to check if there were any more threats to Tae-hyuk, the witness.

Tae-hyuk thought it was good that the tip went to him.

'Ah, Detective-nim. You are rejuvenated. You don't even have the potbelly anymore.'

It was so different from the Cho Kang-suk he remembered that Tae-hyuk couldn't help laughing. Only the eyes that burned with the flames of justice were the same.

"Detective Cho Kang-suk. You should now receive a special promotion."

"Brat. If you are facing any trouble, contact Hyung... but you don't look like the type who will be easily bullied. "Ah. Have you eaten lunch? Shall Hyung buy you a bowl of jajangmyeon?"

"Wah. I gave you the top merit for catching this criminal, yet you only want to buy me a bowl of jajangmyeon?"

"Well. Do you want tangsuyuk as well?"

"Nope. I've actually already eaten. Instead, there is something else I need your help with. Help me get the bounty money, as this is my first time."

Cho Kang-suk chuckled. He seemed to like the bold Tae-hyuk.

"Haha. Doesn't it sound like you're planning to do this again?"

"....."

"Puhaha. What is with that expression? Anyway. You are Tae-hyuk? Really, thank you. Yoo Cheol-ho, that bastard, is a really

dangerous guy. Had he escaped, then he would have definitely started killing again. We were able to catch him without any injury, thanks to your report.”

Tae-hyuk felt something hot rising from within his heart.

He hadn't realized because he had been focused on the reward.

Tae-hyuk had saved the lives of three future murder victims.

The tragedy in the future had changed.

It was at that moment.

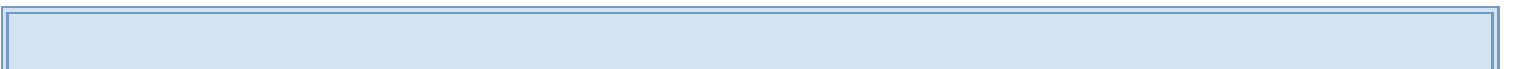
The mirror vibrated.

'Eh, I didn't bump into anyone.'

The crime skill Robbery seemed to activate regardless of Tae-hyuk's will.

However, there was the condition that he needed to touch the other person.

He pulled out the mirror and checked the sentences.



[3 affinity points have been acquired.]

[You can use the affinity points to enhance crime skills or activate hidden attributes.]

“What is this?”



# Chapter 5 - This Is All Thanks To Good Neighbours

---

After studying it all night, Tae-hyuk had finally figured out the usage of the mirror to a certain extent.

It was basically the same as a smartphone with a touchscreen.

He could touch the screen to get any desired information, and even to change any of its settings.

Tae-hyuk could call up a list of accessible skills by clicking on the [Crime Skills] tab.

‘Robbery’ was currently the only one available.

Furthermore, Tae-hyuk had three affinity points, which he recalled seeing in a game before.

The acquired points could be used to strengthen skills.

Once he clicked on an item, several lists came up.

He could steal things from a person who didn’t even bump into him, pick the item that he wanted, etc. They all seemed like useful skill enhancements; however, the number of affinity points needed varied for each enhancement.

The one that was most expensive, at a total of 10 points, was stealing several items at once. The other enhancements ranged from one to five points.

Tae-hyuk decided to test the affinity points.

'First of all, I have to raise this.'

'Robbery' was the skill that stole the object of a person he bumped into. The slightest mistake meant he could be seen as a pickpocket.

Fortunately, there was an attribute to avoid that.

'Activation Timing Adjustment!'

After selecting the desired attribute, he pressed the 'enhance' button, and the screen flashed with a message.

'...It is like I am watching a B grade mobile game. Surely it won't fail?'

[Insufficient affinity points.]

'Ack! What? It requires five points to get Activation Timing

Adjustment?!’

He needed two more points in order to prevent the crime skill from being triggered at an inconvenient time in the future.

The problem was that he didn’t know how to acquire additional points.

As Tae-hyuk grabbed his head in distress, somebody suddenly spoke to him.

“Hey, Tae-hyuk. It is Hyung.”

Cho Kang-suk, who was wearing jeans and an Aloha t-shirt, opened the cafe door and waved out to him.

He was also wearing red sunglasses.

Tae-hyuk instinctively wanted to leave the cafe but endured that notion.

Kang-suk, despite his abhorrent taste in fashion, had come to help.

Tae-hyuk greeted him.

“Hello, Kang-suk hyung.”

Kang-suk sat in a chair and said.

"I paid some attention to what I am wearing today. Huhu. Thanks to you, I received a holiday. I am planning to go to a club in the evening."

Going to a club...?

Tae-hyuk had a headache.

"It is really cool. I thought you were a model."

"Haha! This guy. Won't you do well in your social life?"

He was tall and had big, broad shoulders, so his social life wasn't bad. However, he seemed to be more popular with men than with women.

"Auntie! A cup of coffee over here please! Keep it coming!"

"...Here, you have to go to the counter and order it."

"I-I see. I've never been here before."

Kang-suk scratched his head and ordered a cup of ice coffee.

After waiting for a while, the clerk came with an iced coffee and some ice cubes.

Kang-suk took a gulp and said,

“I still don’t know the difference between iced coffee and cold coffee.”

The tea room coffee seemed to suit his taste more.

"Thank you for helping me today."

Tae-hyuk bowed his head.

Today’s meetup was regarding money.

If a high school student accepted the reward money, then twisted, greedy dung flies would gather.

If Detective Kang-suk claimed it, then such people could be effectively prevented.

He was sincerely grateful for Kang-suk’s help.

“Well, I can take a vacation thanks to you.”

“Then let’s go straight away.”

"Hey. Sit down. There is an order in the works."

Kang-suk started to explain.

"I think you should know most of it to a certain extent, but I'll explain the details. Although the basic reward is 50 million won, you won't be able to receive all of it."

Tae-hyuk nodded. It was quite silly, but he had to pay a certain amount under the pretext of taxes.

"15% will be taken as the withholding tax. Then there is another 22% for the unearned income tax. Ultimately, you get 63% of the original reward.

Tae-hyuk already knew that 15% would be taken.

However, he didn't account for the unearned income tax, the tax on profits obtained without working.

He had worked hard to earn this money!

Tae-hyuk felt wronged, but as it was the law, he couldn't do anything about it.

"In the end, I will still get 31.5 million won."

"That's right, that is still a lot of money. It is even more than my regular salary."

"You have a terribly small salary."

"Hey, don't say that. Anyway, what will you do with that money? Don't spend it in strange places. Do you want Hyung to help you with installment savings?"

Tae-hyuk decided to tell the truth.

"Well. In fact, my parents died in an accident and a few debts behind. We can try and give up the inheritance, but it will be of no use as it was dragged into my noona's name. In the end, I am living with my noona in a semi-basement rented room. My noona's health keeps on getting worse due to the bad air, however. I was planning on using the bounty money to move us out of the semi-basement and into a better home."

"...Well. This brat. A real man!"

Kang-suk's voice trembled. He thought that after Tae-hyuk received the money, he would use it to buy things he wanted or to travel overseas. Kang-suk was proven wrong, however, and was deeply impressed.

Kang-suk pounded on Tae-hyuk's back.

He liked this type of heart.

‘N-no!’

However, Tae-hyuk inwardly let out a shriek.

Once again, his crime skill was triggered.

[Robbery has been used.]

-You have failed to steal the opponent's belongings...

Fortunately, it was a failure.

Even if it was a mistake, stealing Kang-suk's wallet would be the end.

‘Luckily it failed... Uack!’

However, Kang-suk hadn't finished pounding his back.

Pang pang pang!

Robbery was triggered each time.



‘Failure..., ah again failure...!’

The success rate was lower than he thought.

But no matter how low the probability was, as long as it wasn't zero, it would eventually succeed.

[Robbery has been used.]

-You have succeeded in stealing the opponent's belongings!

‘Dammit. I stole a detective's property!’

People were sentenced for two years in prison for special larcenies.

“Eh. Sorry. Are you in pain?”

Kang-suk saw that Tae-hyuk's face turning sour, and had stopped pounding his back.

Fortunately, Robbery stopped after only succeeding once.

'This is really crazy. I have to do something about this.'

All he needed to do was bump into someone to activate Robbery.

While this was sometimes useful, more difficult situations like this would occur.

‘Um. But what did I steal?’

Please, just let it not be the wallet! If that happened, then he wouldn’t be able to get out of it.

He searched through his pockets while trying to maintain an expression that was as casual as possible. Fortunately, it wasn’t the wallet that was stolen.

Unfortunately, the item stolen was even worse than a wallet.

‘Crazy. Handcuffs!’

It wasn’t a toy, and it wasn’t an SM item. It was the real, original thing.

It was made of a very solid alloy so it would be a big deal if he accidentally put it on.

‘How do I prevent him from noticing...’

Unfortunately, the only crime skill available to him was 'Robbery'.

He would only steal the other person's possession if he used it. The opposite, returning the other's possession, was impossible.

It would be possible if he was a skilled pickpocket, but unfortunately, Tae-hyuk wasn't considered one.

'Come to think about it, there was no attribute regarding returning the possession.'

Certainly, it wouldn't be considered an act that fell under robbery.

'It can't be helped. Let's just go by the book!'

"Ah. Hyung-nim. You dropped this."

Tae-hyuk deliberately dropped the handcuffs onto the ground and pretended to pick them up.

He was tense as sweat dripped down his back.

'Damn. This type of lie would only work on a fool!'

However, there was no other alternative.

“Tae-hyuk, this brat...”

‘As expected, he saw through my lies!’

“Really, thank you! Aish, when did this fall? Last time I lost it, I had to spend 200,000 won to buy a new one from the stolen goods department! I’m glad you found it this time.”

It passed!

Furthermore, it was a stolen property.

“...That is a relief.”

Kang-suk wasn’t the neighbourhood hyung type, but the neighbourhood fool type.

"Anyway, a deposit on a house would be difficult with 30 million won. The housing prices have gone insanely expensive these days. Are you living together with just your noona?"

"Nope. My younger brother as well."

“Three people. Well, you should have at least two rooms. Will the house be near here?”

“Yes. Noona works at a factory nearby, so it needs to be within a walking distance.”

Kang-suk was thinking with all his strength as if it was his own problem.

Although Tae-hyuk already knew that Kang-suk was overflowing with kindness and openness, he hadn't expected this level of sincerity.

‘It is good that I’m entrusting it to Kang-suk.’

Kang-suk let out a strange moan as he searched through a real estate app.

"You'll need at least 30 million won to rent a house. Damn. There are no taxes set on the bounties from companies... Shouldn't the country pay more when such a big criminal is caught?"

Wait. A bounty from companies?

‘I’m certain that a big company put out a bounty for Yoo Cheol-ho.’

He couldn't remember exactly where.

‘Where was it... ah. Sungjin Group!’

Tae-hyuk carefully told this fact to Kang-suk.

Kang-suk was delighted, as if it was his own work.

“Yes. Let’s jump and catch two things today!”

"We'll go get the bounty from the government first. Do we receive it from Central Bank?"

“It is like the lottery. Did you bring what I asked you to?”

Tae-hyuk nodded.

They were copies of his ID card and a bankbook in his own name.

“If you send that to the person in charge ,then it will be deposited by tomorrow. Originally, they reward would be received from Central Bank, but it is like Tae-hyuk said. There would be problems if you went there.”

“Certainly. Lotto prizes would be received, there so there would be dung flies buzzing around all day.”

“Haha. Yes, dung flies.”

There were people looking for investors, saying they had a ‘sure fire’ item. Businessmen asking for donations. In addition, there

were gangsters with crude and rough words. Various groups would be gathered like flies.

Kang-suk gathered the papers that Tae-hyuk gave him.

"I'll give this to the person in charge."

"Kang-suk hyung, I really appreciate what you've done so far."

"No, it's fine. Anyway, I will be interviewed as the detective who caught Yoo Cheol-ho, and it'll come out on the evening news."

"Oh. You will be a celebrity."

However, he wondered what type of clothing would be worn for the interview. Surely, he wouldn't show up on TV like that?

Tae-hyuk had an ominous feeling.

"One thing is over."

It ended earlier than he thought.

Tae-hyuk said with a satisfied expression,

"Then let's storm the Sungjin Group."

"Well. Can we do that?"

"Of course. I made a key tip in catching Yoo Cheol-ho. Kang-suk hyung is the one who caught Yoo Cheol-ho. If we can't go, then who can?"

"I-is that so?"

"Then we will go straight to headquarters. I know the location."

"You sound like you worked there or something."

Tae-hyuk just smiled instead of answering.

Worked there?

It was the place where he was previously framed.



## Chapter 6 - This Is All Thanks To Good Neighbours #2

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"You came for the bounty?"

"Yes. I am the person who caught Yoo Cheol-ho, and he is the one who made the crucial tip.

A man in an Aloha t-shirt and a person wearing a school uniform came forward, claiming that they caught Yoo Cheol-ho.

The receptionist made a strange expression.

"I haven't heard about something like this..."

"Cough. Is that so?"

While Kang-suk made a trouble expression, Tae-hyuk intervened.

"Director Cho Hun-il of the Personnel Administration Department... I mean, Team Leader Cho Hun-il. Maybe he will know. He is the person directly involved in the bounty."

"Team Leader Cho Hun-il...? Ah, yes! I understand. I'll check it straight away."

As soon as the name of the person in charge was mentioned, the

receptionist was surprised and hurriedly made a call.

Kang-suk's eyes widened as he saw it.

“Wah. How did you know that?”

“Didn't you hear that I deliver for a Chinese restaurant?”

“Yes.”

“I heard about it during a delivery.”

“You deliver here as well?”

“Yes. It is quite the famous restaurant.”

“I see!”

Kang-suk's eyes shone.

How delicious would the food be if even a large company ordered it?

A detective and his jajangmyeon had an inseparable relationship. He vowed that he would order from the restaurant to try it out one day.

"Sorry to have kept you waiting!"

The receptionist's attitude had flipped on its end. They bowed respectfully and guided the two people to a VIP room.

Surprisingly, it wasn't Team Leader Cho Hun-il who was waiting there.

There was a beautiful woman, so beautiful that it wouldn't be strange to see her on TV, sitting in a chair.

"Hello."

The woman in the chair bowed her head.

She had neatly cropped, shoulder length hair.

"I apologize for greeting you while sitting down."

She pointed to the wheelchair next to the chair.

'Her legs are disabled.'

She was unable to walk, so it was natural for her to greet them while sitting down.

“I am Jung Yuri. I hear that the both of you have caught Yoo Cheol-ho.”

Kang-suk was so nervous in front of the pale beauty that he couldn't speak for a while.

Tae-hyuk then pressed against his side and exclaimed.

“Ah! This schoolboy... Seo Tae-hyuk made a crucial tip that led to his arrest. I am Cho Kang-suk of the Kang-dong police station's 2nd team.”

Kang-suk pulled out his business card from his wallet.

The woman tilted her head in confusion. Even that small movement made her look beautiful.

"I thought that detectives would be more upright than this.”

“Haha! I am a bit unique.”

‘He completely fell for her. However, Hyung falling for her is a type of crime.’

At the most, she looked like a university student. The age difference between she and Kang-suk was at least one zodiac cycle large.

'By the way, who is she?'

This was the VIP room of Sungjin Group, the largest corporation in South Korea. She definitely wasn't any ordinary woman.

The president's secretary? ... I don't think so.

She gave off a strange feeling of elegance.

Yuri bowed her head.

"Yoo Cheol-ho... Thank you for catching him. I want him to be judged by the law."

Kang-suk made a pleasant smile when he heard her saying 'judged by the law.'

While she was still speaking calmly, Yuri had strange emotions showing in her eyes.

Anger. Hate.

He was confused over why she had such feelings.

Although he was just sent here, Tae-hyuk had worked here as a security guard for two years. It was the first time seeing or hearing of someone named Jung Yuri, however.

She was either unrelated to the company, or a super VIP that Tae-hyuk could never approach.

Tae-hyuk thought about the identity of the woman.

He might be able to find a connection.

‘If a bounty was issued, then he must have leaked core secrets from the company. Either that, or he hurt a VIP. However, Yoo Cheol-ho wasn’t someone who would have any confidential information to leak.

This meant that one of his victims was related to Sungjin Group.

Usually, the victim’s identity wasn’t exposed to the media, especially if the person was a big business owner.

However, Tae-hyuk happened to be Yoo Cheol-ho’s neighbour.

‘Yes. He boasted about killing the daughter of a very important person. The name...’

At that moment, the name popped into Tae-hyuk’s head.

Currently, he was the president that oversaw one of Sungjin Group’s divisions, and also one that would climb up to be the vice-chairman of the company in the future.

‘Vice Chairman Jung Gwan-mok!’

That reminded him, Jung Yuri had the same surname. Maybe...

"Are you perhaps President Jung Kwan-mok's daughter?"

Jung Yuri's eyes widened at Tae-hyuk's words.

"H-how did you know?"

"I work at a Chinese restaurant. Sometimes he comes in to eat jajangmyeon. He has been a regular for 20 years. I noticed that you resemble him."

"My father and jajangmyeon... At any rate, I wasn't trying to hide it. I will greet you again. I am Jung Yuri, the director for the 2nd Public Relations Support Team."

The daughter of a president of a large company. Kang-suk's mouth hung open from where he watching, while Tae-hyuk nodded as if he already expected it.

‘Well, because she got to her position at such a young age, most would think she was gliding off her father's success. That's why she hides it.’

"If Noona is involved then you must be related to one of Yoo

Cheol-ho's victims..."

Jung Yuri laughed at being called 'noona.'

Then her expression became cold and hard when she heard Yoo Cheol-ho's name.

"...Yes. My unni. Please don't tell this to the press. Of course, I'd obstruct you if you tried."

Yuri's face looked like the manager of a big company.

Tae-hyuk nodded.

Kang-suk replied awkwardly like a broken robot.

"Yes. I will be careful."

"Then sit down and relax. I'll get to the point."

Tae-hyuk and Kang-suk sat down as a tea set came out. There were also sweets prepared in advance.

"Please eat."

Kang-suk instantly put the sweets in his mouth and swallowed hard without chewing.



"The sweets are delicious."

"Ahaha. I made them myself. So please eat more."

"Ah, yep!"

"So, about the bounty. Seo Tae-hyuk, who played a crucial role in catching him, will receive 100 million won. Of course, you won't need to pay any taxes since it is a reward."

One hundred million!

That was enough to get a decent home in the area.

Tae-hyuk received the bounty, but Kang-suk was the one who made a fuss.

"Wah Tae-hyuk! Amazing. 100 million won! Let's see, with that money... You can get a 3LDK house!"

Tae-hyuk bowed with gratitude and opened his mouth.

It was lacking.

"Jung Yuri noona. I'm talking to the director of the Public Relations Support Team, not a family member of a victim."

“H-huh?”

"The bounty money should be 200 million, not 100 million."

"No, it is clearly 100 million per person..."

Jung Yuri stuttered due to her confusion. She had thought of him as a cute younger brother, and never imagined that he would insist on doubling the money like this.

"100 million per person is correct. But clearly, 'we' are two people. Surely there aren't any restrictions on a detective receiving a reward? There clearly wasn't one stated."

"T-that is correct but..."

Normally, detectives didn't receive rewards for catching criminals.

"Of course, the criminal was able to be caught due to my tip. However, he probably wouldn't have been caught if it wasn't for Kang-suk hyung. He believed in the report of a high school student and went to investigate. Kang-suk hyung also threw his body to catch the criminal when he was running. So, did I catch him alone?"

"Certainly..."

"Ah. I thought I was talking to a director of a big company. So let's look at it from the perspective of the Sungjin Group. Isn't the Sungjin Group launching a new crime prevention business? Its concept is justice, which is why you put up bounties to catch criminals."

"You actually know so much."

"I accidentally heard the president talking."

"Ah, Father."

"At any rate, I don't think it would harm a company to support a detective who caught a criminal. Kang-suk hyung is even appearing on this evening's news as the detective who caught the criminal. If Kang-suk hyung receives the reward then it will be quite the picture. What do you think?"

Tae-hyuk stopped for a moment.

Jung Yuri was watching Tae-hyuk with wide eyes. Kang-suk was already half collapsed.

"The justice you have created. We will protect it with all our might."

The detective who caught the criminal had the whole country in

an uproar. This was including the big company that was supporting him.

It was a chance to completely change any negative image about the Sungjin Group.

The money spent on corporate image making every year was in the tens of billions of won.

When looking at that fact, 100 million wasn't a large sum of money.

Tae-hyuk's words were strangely persuasive.

"Could you please wait for a moment? I will contact my father."

Jung Yuri's hands were shaking.

She picked up the intercom on the table and called someone.

"Ah, Father. This is Yuri. About the bounty for today? Because..."

Yuri explained for almost 10 minutes.

"Yes, I understand. Of course, I will fill out a report. Yes. A high school student... that's right. I'm sure."

After finishing the conversation, Jung Yuri slowly took a few deep breaths.

Then she smiled brightly and made the victory sign.

"Hooray!"

Kang-suk looked like he was going to cry.

He had unexpectedly gained 100 million won.

Tae-hyuk inwardly smiled with satisfaction.

Anyways, he had obtained a bounty of 100 million. It would be good to make the most of that, now that Kang-suk would completely become his protector.

He obtained a trustworthy person with someone else's money.

'It is all thanks to Vice President-nim.'

The words he said about Jung Kwan-mok were half true.

Of course, Tae-hyuk had seen him when working as a security guard here.

Furthermore, it wasn't now but 20 years ago that he went to eat jajangmyeon. The chef still boasted about serving the president of a large company.

The manner in which he managed to learn about the new business was a lie, because he actually had memories of the future.

Jung Yuri didn't seem to have the personality to talk about her father's mistakes.

In the first place, her title was exaggerated.

Her father had probably given it to her in order to protect her.

The evidence was that Tae-hyuk, who had been working here for two years, never saw her.

Warak!

"Tae-hyuk!"

Kang-suk hugged Tae-hyuk so tightly that it felt like his bones were going to break.

"Hyung. I'm choking..."

"Brat. It is so touching. Really, thank you. 100 million, 100

million. I think I can get married if I have this much money!”

He would have to find a person first.

Tae-hyuk glanced at Kang-suk but didn’t say it.

"I'll contact you directly through the Gang-dong police station. Ah. You might have to do some interviews or CF shoots for corporate promotion."

"I'll have to ask the chief first, but it will probably be a positive answer."

"At any rate, congratulations Detective-nim. You have received 100 million won."

"This is all thanks to my younger brother. Haha. Tae-hyuk!"

Kang-suk hugged Tae-hyuk, this time pounding him on the back as well.

[Robbery has been used.]

-You have succeeded in stealing the opponent’s belongings!

"N-no!"

Tae-hyuk couldn't resist crying out loud.

"...D-do you not like it?"

'That's not it! The crime skill was triggered!'

Additionally, this time it succeeded without any failures.

Tae-hyuk searched through his pockets.

He touched a somewhat damp piece of cloth.

He took care not to be noticed by Kang-suk and Yuri while checking it.

His expression instantly became rotten.

'Crazy. Panties!'

He managed to steal a piece of clothing that someone was wearing.

'Robbery' was scary!



Kang-suk started dancing without being aware that his underwear was gone.

It was the joy of winning a lottery.

In fact, Tae-hyuk was the same.

'100 million won, a jackpot! Yes. I should obtain a house so I can surprise Noona.'

Obviously, it would help Kang-suk as well.

# Chapter 7 - This Is All Thanks To Good Neighbours #3

---

Seo Ha-ran left work 30 minutes later than usual.

After finishing her work, she usually cleaned up the things that the other workers didn't. Today, however, the workload was greater than usual.

‘My younger brothers will be waiting...’

She often felt uneasy when walking down dark streets.

She wondered if she was doing well as a parent. She worked 12 hours a day, and yet still couldn't afford to buy good clothes for her brothers.

“Cough!”

She suddenly coughed. She had inhaled heavy dust all day at the factory.

In addition, she lived in a cold, damp place where that didn't receive any sunlight, so she always had a cold.

‘Still, tomorrow is my payday. Let's have a samgyupsal party!’

Her younger brothers would be able to eat their fill.

She felt strength surging when she thought about her younger brothers.

‘Eh, that person is?’

There was a familiar shadow in the alley.

"Hmm, Tae-hyuk?"

"Um, how did you know?"

"Noona knows everything."

Ha-ran smiled at her brother who came out to meet her when she came home late from work.

Tae-hyuk said bluntly.

“Why are you so late? I thought I was going to die from the cold while waiting. Let's hurry.”

“Yes! Isn’t it cold?”

Ha-ran suddenly ran to Tae-hyuk and grabbed his arm.

[Robbery has been used.]

-You have failed in stealing the opponent's belongings...

‘Ugh. Fortunately, it failed.’

"Ah, why are you doing this again?"

Tae-hyuk turned his head, but didn't exactly hate it.

He took off his coat and put it on Ha-ran.

Ha-ran smiled sweetly.

Although her brother always showed a rough face, she knew that his heart was warmer than anyone else's.

"Ah, right. Wear this."

Tae-hyuk gave her a blindfold.

Ha-ran tilted her head.

"Is this your hobby these days?"

"...It's not like that. Today is Noona's birthday, so I've prepared a surprise party."

"Ohh... Party?"

Ha-ran's eyes shone in excitement. Her heart was still that of a teenage girl, after all.

Her eyes were covered as her brother guided her.

It should have taken them a long time to arrive at their home, though. Unexpectedly, they arrived at their destination in a matter of minutes.

"We're here."

Ha-ran slowly took off the blindfold and opened her eyes.

"Wah, a good home."

It was like a house seen in a drama, a spacious three room house.

Additionally, there was even a luxurious sofa and a hanging chandelier. There was also a TV that seemed to be 50 inches wide.

Ha-ran asked just to make sure.

“Did you borrow a friend’s house for the birthday party?”

"No. This is our house."

“... What does that mean?”

“Come on, everybody has been waiting. We should go inside.”

Tae-hyuk grabbed Ha-ran’s hand and dragged her inside.

He then brought her to a room with a sign that said, ‘Seo Ha-ran’.

There was a great cheer as soon as the door opened.

"Happy birthday Noona!"

"Congratulations on your birthday!"

Bang! Bang!

Firecrackers popped out.

Ha-ran covered her mouth in surprise.

She was so shocked that she couldn't even scream.

Ha-ran looked around the room.

It was a dream room with a frilly bed and even cabinets.

If she slept in here, then she would always feel like a princess.

"T-Tae-min ah! ... And who are you?"

Inside the room, her younger brother, Tae-min, and a big stranger were both wearing a cone hat.

"Ah. This is Cho Kang-suk hyung. He helped me out quite a lot."

Once Tae-hyuk introduced Kang-suk, Ha-ran greeted him with a bow.

"Haha! Hello. I've heard a lot about you from Tae-hyuk. I am Cho Kang-suk of the Gang-dong police station's 2nd team."

"Detectives...?"

Tae-hyuk said in a voice so small that only Ha-ran could hear.

"He is just a neighbourhood fool."

"Ah, this child."

"Have you eaten dinner yet? There isn't much but let's eat."

There were beef steaks and a gorgeous cake. There was even a salad made of various fruits.

The recipient of this party was rather confused.

Ha-ran thought it might be a dream and pinched herself on the arm.

"Ahat!"

Fortunately, it wasn't a dream.

"Tae-hyuk What's going on? What is this house?"

"Ah. It is like this."

Tae-hyuk explain the situation in a simple manner.

He had chanced upon the whereabouts of a wanted criminal, so he filed a report and received a reward.



The money was then used to buy a house for his sister.

Ha-ran's face reddened as she heard the story, and grabbed Tae-hyuk's cheek as she pulled him out from the room.

"N-Noona. Isn't this good?"

"That's not it! A wanted criminal! What were you doing? It is dangerous! Huh? Are you hurt anywhere?"

At that moment, Tae-hyuk's heart warmed on the inside.

She was more concerned for his well-being than this spacious house.

"O-Of course. Who am I? Noona's little brother."

Kang-suk, who had been listening from the room, interrupted their conversation.

"Haha. Noonim, don't be so anxious. This is Tae-hyuk, who is a very sly guy. Even if he were to be thrown into Harlem, New York, he would still probably come out alive."

"... Yes."

Ha-ran grabbed Tae-hyuk's ear this time and whispered.

"Then is he the detective responsible for catching the criminal?"

"Yes. He seems to have really become my hyung this past week."

"I see."

They gathered again and started the birthday party.

After singing happy birthday, they ate the food and talked.

"By the way, Noonim. You are much more beautiful than from what I heard in his stories."

"Ey, don't flatter me too much on my birthday."

"Seriously."

'Kang-suk hyung...! You fall for women way too easily!'

Tae-hyuk's head started hurting.

Tae-min, who was drinking juice on the side, suddenly approached Kang-suk.

"Detective Cho Kang-suk. I've seen the interview, and your speech on justice was great. Can I ask for your autograph?"

‘Tae-min also fell for him! A love triangle!’

Kang-suk chuckled and signed while telling Tae-min to think of him as a hyung.

‘That reminds me, Tae-min. He wanted to be a lawyer?’

This time, Tae-hyuk wanted to see that dream come true.

It was at that moment that Ha-ran suddenly started to cry.

“Wahh!”

The confused Tae-hyuk asked.

“N-Noona. Why are you crying all of a sudden? Do you not like the food?”

"No, that's not it..." I'm just so happy. My family living together in this nice home... The whole thing feels like a dream..."

“It isn’t a dream. So, the three of us will continue to live happily every after.”

“Y-yes.”

"Tae-hyuk, why is it just the three of you? What about me?"

Kang-suk interrupted.

Tae-hyuk waved his hand like he was shooing a bothersome fly.

"Hyung isn't part of the family."

“Chet.”

Ha-ran soon started to laugh again.

It was because Kang-suk started doing a strange dance.

It was surprisingly easy for Kang-suk to blend in with the family, as Tae-hyuk viewed Kang-suk as a trustworthy person.

‘A person like this is rare.’

In the past five days, he had helped Tae-hyuk in finding a home and buying furniture. He even used his arms to help move it.

If it were Kang-suk, then Tae-hyuk could entrust his family to him.

After thinking that, Tae-hyuk quietly left his seat and headed to his room.

The new house was so spacious that the three family members could each have a separate room.

‘I used 100 million to acquire this house, while the furniture costed 15 million won. The remaining balance is around 20 million.’

It would be the military funds for his work in the future.

Tae-hyuk sat at a desk and took out a notebook.

There were already many things written down. However, it still wasn't enough.

There was a limit to the human memory, even more so if it was a dream. Therefore, he had to write down as many details about the dream before he forgot them.

Tae-hyuk saw what would happen in the next 15 years in a dream. Even if the ending was a tragedy, it was clear that this information would be very useful.

‘I should have memorized a lottery number.’

Most of the information that Tae-hyuk knew about the future was regarding criminals. They were huge criminals that caused a sensation around the country.

There were approximately 120 people.

Tae-hyuk opened the notebook and started writing down his own blacklist.

He wrote down things like: what had already happened, and what crimes were going to happen.

‘I also can’t forget about the crime skills.’

It didn’t matter if he couldn’t handle them properly yet. He should be able to make good use of them.

Tae-hyuk now had two weapons: his blacklist and the crime skills.

‘Who will be accused of murder?’

He would protect the small happiness he now possessed with his own two hands.

Tae-hyuk made this vow.

It was at that moment that the mirror suddenly vibrated.

[Due to a new contact, one affinity point has been acquired.]

“What? Did I get a point just now?”

Why did he get it all of a sudden?

Tae-hyuk didn’t even do anything.

Moreover, it wasn’t the end.

[The first upgrade condition, ‘Blacklist Creation’, has been completed.]

[Once all the upgrades conditions are complete, you will be able to upgrade to ‘Noble.’]

[If you become a Noble, then you can gain a wider variety of crime skills.]

Tae-hyuk muttered quietly after reading all the messages.

"Starting from a 'Commoner' and rising to a 'Noble'? Am I going to develop into the God of Crime?"

His head started to hurt.



## Chapter 8 - The Second Skill

---

It had been a week since they moved into the new house.

They still walked without thinking toward their old house, but the frequency of that would soon decrease.

In the meantime, two things had changed.

First of all, Ha-ran's resting time had increased.

This was because she had changed from the second shift to the third shift.

It was a bold decision since they didn't need to pay a monthly rent anymore.

Of course, Ha-ran had refused. The salary difference was significant.

She had argued that she could send Tae-min to a private cram school with that money.

However, even Tae-min had opposed her, so she was forced to surrender.

What could be done when Tae-min said that his brain was too good to go to a cram school?

Of course, he had to suffer a headlock from Tae-hyuk who was standing next to him.

Ha-ran was now able to have some personal time.

Whether it was because of the time to relax or the move, Ha-ran's cough had disappeared completely.

Tae-hyuk smiled warmly at that.

Then the second change...

He now had a family to greet him when he came home.

Tae-hyuk moved quickly.

Noona would be waiting for him to eat dinner.

‘By the way. I never thought that Kang-suk hyung would donate all the reward money...’

Originally, a detective wasn't supposed to receive the bounty money. It was likely to be construed as a bribe.

Out of the 200 million won that Tae-hyuk had received, he had given 100 million to Kang-suk.

Yet Kang-suk had donated all the reward money from the Sungjin Group to an orphanage.

Tae-hyuk had asked why he didn't use it for his marriage funds and Kang-suk had simply laughed.

Kang-suk had watched the children playing on the playground and said,

"They are the only ones who would want to marry me, so it seems like I will have to wait 10 years."

"Wah. A detective is trying to commit a crime."

This was because Kang-suk was really popular with the children.

Kang-suk had laughed and said this was enough.

There were only idiots around Tae-hyuk.

'Come to think of it. I haven't received any crime skills in the past week.'

There was still a long time until the next incident on the blacklist. He thought about using that time to pull back the veil of the demon mirror.

‘Ah, right. I decided to call it the Demon Revealing Mirror.’

It was the magic mirror that illuminated the true image of a demon.

He had recently discovered that the success rate of Robbery was around 10%.

However, it was good at stealing strange things, such as:

A wig; handcuffs; panties...

Forget it.

He still didn’t know how to get skills and affinity points, nor did he know the identity of the Demon Revealing Mirror.

‘Damn, that pseudo bastard.’

He had taken it to a shaman who was famous in dealing with demon-possessed items. This was what the shaman had said,

“It is made of bronze, a mix between copper and tin. The reflection rate is around 80%. This probably wasn’t made to be used as a mirror. It looks ceremonial. The value...”

The conclusion was that it was just an ordinary mirror.

Tae-hyuk glared at the Demon Revealing Mirror. Strange letters could still be seen on it.

[Seo Tae-hyuk]

---

-Title: God of Crime

-Rating: Commoner (Lacking conditions for upgrade)

-Skills Possessed: Robbery (Lv 1)

???

‘Eh?’

There were letters that he could see.

Additionally, there was something blurred under the skills section.

‘Perhaps... a clue to a new skill?’

Tae-hyuk pressed on the question marks.

However, there was no reaction.

‘The direction...?’

Tae-hyuk hurried forward.

He decided to look through everything about the Demon Revealing Mirror when he got back.

‘Uh, isn’t that Noona?’

Tae-hyuk stopped walking. Ha-ran was standing on the street outside their house with a face that seemed like she was about to cry.

She looked anxious like something big had happened.

“T-tae-hyuk! What do I do...?!”

‘What, is there a thief or something?’

If he had known, he would have come home earlier.

Fortunately, Ha-ran seemed unharmed despite her face being a mess of tears.

“What’s going on?”

"I-it is a big deal. He’s hurt. An accident. He was taken."

“Wait a minute. Take a deep breath and tell me slowly. Say it again. What happened and to who?”

Ha-ran breathed slowly as she followed Tae-hyuk’s words and finally started to calm down.

Tae-hyuk stroked the back of the still crying Ha-ran. Now that she was a little more normal, he was able to hear a clear answer,

“...I just got a call. Tae-hyuk was injured. He stole a luxury car and an accident happened. Unless he receives surgery, his life is at risk. Plus, the car is completely smashed, so he will go to jail if...”

‘That Tae-hyuk bastard. Isn’t he a completely crazy bastard?’

‘Wait a minute, that's me!’

“...Noona, wait. Who am I?”

"T-tae-hyuk."

"Then think about the story you just told me."

“What should I do, Tae-hyuk? Tae-hyuk is injured!”

“Look, I'm safe and sound.”

“...?”

Ha-ran still seemed confused.

Tae-hyuk realized that Ha-ran had been subjected to a crime.

'Voice phishing!'

It was a type of phone fraud.

10 years ago in Japan, they had called it the 'It's Me Fraud'.

A call would come from someone saying, 'It's me' and that they had been seriously hurt, 'Please deposit some money quickly.' This way, they could pretend to be a close person without saying the name.

As this approach became more famous and no one fell for it anymore, they started pretending about different things.

Something like your bankbook password had been leaked and they needed to deposit the money into another account.



In this way, they had deceived the other person.

Ha-ran had fallen for a trick that was commonly used 10 years ago.

“Noona, I’m okay. Do you think that I would steal a car?”

Tae-hyuk hugged Ha-ran gently and stroked her back.

She stopped crying as the excitement subsided.

“I am fine. I won’t get into any car accidents and...”

He wouldn’t be framed for murder either.

Tae-hyuk explained to Ha-ran slowly.

“Then it is a scam?”

"Not yet. The other person is just spreading out the trap."

"But it is good that you are safe and sound."

Tae-hyuk grinned at his sister.

The reason the ‘It’s Me Fraud’ was effective was because it played

on the person's affection. He was thankful for that fact.

'Still, why is a scam that was popular a few years ago being used now?'

Ha-ran was someone who had graduated from a girl's dormitory in middle school and high school. As soon as she graduated, she had started work straight away to look after her little brothers.

She was just like a flower that grew in a greenhouse and didn't know anything about the world.

So, she was silly enough to believe in others. In other words, she was a sitting duck.

'At any rate, can it end like this?'

Those guys had made Ha-ran cry. His anger wouldn't be resolved unless he did something.

"That person said they would call again?"

"Yes, he told me to prepare my bankbook and seal and wait for him."

Tae-hyuk smiled widely. The scam was still in progress.

“Noona, give me your handphone and go to your room. There are many interesting dramas these days that you should watch. If anything like this happens again, just call me.”

“Yes... I understand.”

If he waited, a call would come from the opponent.

Tae-hyuk entered his house while thinking about what he could do to them.

---

First of all, he would pretend to be deceived, only to turn the tables on them.

However, Tae-hyuk became distressed about how to do that.

‘They will notice if the person who answers the call has changed.’

The best way was to have Ha-ran pick up and direct her on what to say.

However, she had a pure nature and didn’t want to talk to the scammers anymore.

‘Is there another way?’

Dururu!

He was thinking of a way to catch them when he got a call.

‘Those guys!’

Brr!

However, the vibration wasn’t only heard from his handphone.

It was the Demon Revealing Mirror.

[Crime Skill: Voice Modulation has been learnt.]

-You can imitate the voice of the target directly.

-The criteria to learn the skill completely hasn’t been met yet.

-It has been registered in the temporary skills window.

‘New crime skill...!’

Tae-hyuk’s eyes flashed.

## Chapter 9 - The Second Skill #2

---

Compared to the first skill he had gotten, there was something different about this.

He had learnt Robbery, and now it was Voice Modulation.

‘It has been registered in the temporary skills window. This means it is not yet been learned completely.’

He guessed the reason for the difference.

In the case of Robbery, he had succeeded in using it on the pickpocket as soon as he had gotten the skill.

Tae-hyuk realized the conditions needed to acquire the skills.

‘I need to use the skill on someone else.’

He kept it in mind.

He would deal a big blow to the voice phishers.

It would be easier with the Voice Modulation skill.

Tae-hyuk used the Demon Revealing Mirror to activate Voice Modulation.

He changed his voice to Ha-ran's.

[Voice Modulation has been used.]

-You can imitate the voice of Seo Ha-ran directly.

"Ah... Mic test. Mic test. Seo Tae-hyuk, you are handsome!  
.....Hum, hum."

Tae-hyuk cleared his throat and remained silent.

It was the first time he was using the skill, so it was blended with his original voice.

'I should practice.'

The voice phishers had disconnected the call, but they would call back soon.

In the meantime, he had to master Voice Modulation perfectly.

Tae-hyuk looked in the Demon Revealing Mirror and thought of Ha-ran's voice.

Then he used the skill.

"Tae-hyuk, the weather today is quite good!"

‘Ugh. This sounds like the voice of a transgender.’

It was half a man’s voice and half a woman’s.

Tae-hyuk tried several variations.

"Tae-hyuk, happy birthday. Tae-hyuk, today’s side dishes are your favourite sausages and stir-fried vegetables. Tae-hyuk..."

No matter what he tried, he was missing 2%.

"Tae-hyuk, it is morning. Wake up? Tae-hyuk, I love..."

The voice of a young woman flowed from his mouth.

'That's it!'

Tae-hyuk’s voice was converted to Ha-ran’s perfectly.

‘Anyway, will the temporary skill disappear if I learn a different skill? I need to learn it completely if I want to make it permanent.’

He started to understand some of the mechanisms.

Dururu!

The phone started ringing again.

Tae-hyuk pressed the call button this time.

“H-hello...”

It was a trembling voice that seemed like it would burst out crying at any moment, and it was exactly like Ha-ran’s voice.

On the other side of the phone, a man’s thick voice could be heard,

-There is no need to panic. Your little brother will be okay if you do what I tell you.

"I-is that so?"

-Of course. Have you found what I asked you to?

Tae-hyuk decided to draw out the time.

"I'm sorry. I don't remember what it was... Can you please tell me one more time?"



-The bankbook and seal. And bring your ID card just in case. Once your little brother...

"Tae-hyuk?"

-Yes, approximately 15 million won is required for Tae-hyuk's surgery fees as well as the repair of the car. Do you have that much in your bankbook?

"Yes, there is enough."

-.....

The man's breathing on the other side of the phone became rough.

'That guy. Do you think you've got a sucker?'

"Then I'll look again."

-Yes, I'll call you back after a while. I'll say it once more— Tae-hyuk's life lies in your hands.

Dduooo.

The call was disconnected.

"Kya. Whose life is in whose hands? What a famous line... A famous line."

Tae-hyuk clicked his tongue.

The easiest way to catch them was to get assistance from Kang-suk.

However, as with most voice phishing scams, the other person would be in a foreign country.

...Perhaps, China or the Philippines.

Even if he carried out an investigation, would he be able to catch their tails?

He wanted to inflict damage directly onto them.

‘Wait. How about that method?’

Tae-hyuk had been in prison for 10 years.

During that time, he met countless criminals.

Among those, there had been scammers.

'I didn't think I would use what I learnt from the Elder like this.'

The Elder was the nickname of a legendary scam artist who had stolen hundreds of billions of won in scams.

Even so, he had only received seven years in prison.

Compare this to his roommate who had received three years for stealing ramyun and 40,000 won...

The Elder told him about the prey that was easiest to deceive.

It was those trying to scam other people.

A scam artist who tricked other scam artists. That was the Elder.

"By the way, Noona is really genuine. The other person was so excited about catching a big fish."

In fact, all Tae-hyuk had done was put a spoon in the rice that had been served.

Ha-ran had completely fallen for the voice phishing scam.

From the scammer's point of view, it was like fishing at a fish farm.

Thus, the people hadn't even noticed that the person talking had changed.

"Aigoo. Noona is just like a child..."

Ha-ran was innocent to the point of stupidity.

Maybe that was why she experienced such a tragedy in the future that Tae-hyuk had seen.

He walked slowly through the house.

"They said it was the bankbook and seal? If I'm going to pretend to be duped, it should be perfect."

He searched through the drawer where his sister hid her valuables.

"Huu... I will teach Noonim how to doubt someone."

Tae-hyuk really liked Ha-ran the way she was now. However, he couldn't help feeling uneasy.

"Found it! ... Uh, what is this?"

It was a jewellery box that girls liked to play with.

“This is obviously her treasure box.”

He had no idea her words were so literal.

"Let's open it."

Inside were some photos and a doll that Ha-ran liked. There were valuables like the bankbook along with miscellaneous goods.

"Family photo?"

It had been taken before the accident that their parents had died in. The five family members were gathered together, smiling brightly.

Tae-hyuk felt choked up and couldn't look at it anymore.

In the end, he turned over the photo and saw writing on the back.

‘Now, I am Mother and Father.’

Ha-ran's fine writing.

“...Noona.”

What type of heart did she have when writing this? Tae-hyuk's

heart ached just thinking about it.

“Wake up, Seo Tae-hyuk. Don’t you have to finish what you’re doing?”

He would soak in the emotions after the work was over.

"Uh, there is another piece of paper?"

He tried to put the family photo back where it was and discovered another piece of paper.

Tae-hyuk confirmed what it was.

Then something hot exploded in his heart.

It was a university acceptance letter.

The letter had the name of the university that Ha-ran wanted to go to.

"I’m so stupid that I couldn’t get into university, so now I have to get a job..."

Ha-ran had laughed while saying that.

It had been far from the case.

"That lie... Really stupid."

Tae-hyuk wiped away something hot that was flowing down his cheeks and made a vow.

He was alive due to someone's sacrifice.

It was now his turn to return the favour.

'Yes, I will go to university with Noona.'

Tae-hyuk tightened his grip on the Demon Revealing Mirror and engraved the new determination in his heart.

He waited for a while, then he received a call from those guys.

## Chapter 10 - The Second Skill #3

---

“The banks are closed at such a late time, so go to the nearest ATM machine.”

Those were the instructions Tae-hyuk received.

‘They deliberately aimed for the evening.’

There was a higher probability of someone being alone at around the time when the banks were closed, making for a perfect situation for voice phishing.

Tae-hyuk arrived at the ATM and waited for the call.

Not long afterwards, the person contacted him.

-Have you arrived at the ATM?

‘Oops. I almost forgot to turn on Voice Modulation.’

Tae-hyuk used the Demon Revealing Mirror to activate Voice Modulation.

[Voice Modulation has been used.]



-You can directly imitate the voice of Seo Ha-ran.

“Yes... I arrived.”

-I thought I just heard a man's voice.

Tae-hyuk made a mistake, and the skill had been released.

He manipulated the Demon Revealing Mirror at lightning speed to reactivate Voice Modulation, and then gave a trembling reply.

“I'm not quite sure what you're saying. I'm currently alone so why would a man's voice... Did some type of confusion happen?”

-Indeed. Then, please proceed to deposit the surgery and repair fee into the account that I previously mentioned.

15 million won in total.

‘It is obvious that he wants to shout with joy right now.’

“Yes, I understand. Please wait for a moment.”

Tae-hyuk went to the ATM and deliberately wasted time in order to make the opponent nervous, rendering him unable to make any calm decisions.

After five minutes, the voice phishing scammer spoke.

-Are you done yet?

Tae-hyuk made a fuss, as if he was confused.

“I-It is strange. I have the money in the account, but I can’t make a deposit. W-what is this?”

-Slow down and try again.

“Is the machine broken? I’ll try another bank account.”

Tae-hyuk put his bankbook on the ATM and sent the money.

Of course, it wasn’t 15 million won.

The reaction was immediate.

-I’ve confirmed that 10,000 won has been deposited.

“Really? That's strange. The money was taken out of my living expenses account, so why can't I withdraw from my savings account?”

-...The money is in your savings account? Then it is natural that you can't withdraw the money. A savings account can't be withdrawn from unless it is expired or cancelled.

“Eh, t-then what should I do?”

-You'll have to go to the bank and cancel it.

"The bank isn't open right now!"

-.....

‘Isn't this enough to make it seem like I'm willing to pay? This way, it will be hard for them to give up on my case.’

Tae-hyuk exclaimed like he was just reminded of something.

“Ah! There is a way to withdraw money without having to go to the bank and cancelling it!”

-There is a way?

“Yes. My savings account is a little unusual, as it is a limited savings account. It is a type of savings account where you sign up to collect a certain amount of money before withdrawing it. I signed up to pay for my brothers' university tuition. As long as I have a certain amount of money in my bankbook, I won't have to go to the bank to cancel it.”

-There is such a thing?

“Yes. However, the interest rates are low so it isn’t popular...”

-Indeed.

‘He believes me. Believes me! Of course, this is a lie.’

"At any rate, the limit is 20 million won, so I need three million won before I can withdraw all the money. But getting three million won all of a sudden..."

-Cough.

‘He is conflicted! Conflicted!’

The voice phishing scammer didn’t realize that he himself was being scammed.

Tae-hyuk said the decisive words.

“... I will borrow it from a friend. However, I don’t know if I can borrow three million won so suddenly...”

-P-please wait a moment.

The voice phishing scammer was confused.

If Tae-hyuk contacted a friend then he would have to explain the situation to them, making it obvious to the friend that it was a scam.

The scammer would then miss a valuable fish.

“Huh?”

-Let's do this instead. I will lend you three million won. Let me clarify - you're saying that if you put three million won into the limited savings account, then you can withdraw it right away?”

"It seems so."

-Cough! Then please withdraw the money and send me 18 million won. How about that?

"T-thank you! You are my brother's lifesaver!"

-Then the account number is...

Tae-hyuk receiving the scammer's account number was like finding an oasis in the vast desert.

-Please wait. Oh, don't hang up the phone.

He wanted to stop Tae-hyuk from calling anywhere else and asking around.

"Yes, I understand."

'I'm sorry but I have one more call to make.'

The phone connected to the scammer was Ha-ran's, and Tae-hyuk still had his own phone.

Tae-hyuk silenced the phone to stop the scammer from hearing his conversation and called Kang-suk.

"Kang-suk hyung?"

-Ah, is this Ha-ran ssi?

"....."

'Whoops. I forgot to turn off the skill.'

-It is late so what is going on?

"Ah. Hyung, sorry. It is Tae-hyuk."

-Ah. Is that so? It is late. Go to sleep early.

Tae-hyuk laughed at the clear disappointment in Kang-suk's voice, and proceeded to describe the situation to him.

-Hmm. Let me know once you receive all the information. They called Ha-ran ssi's handphone? I will check the time that it was received, but it will probably lead to a foreign country. It is harder to arrest that way.

"Even if I have the chief bank account information?"

-Hey. How did you get something like that?

Normal bank accounts were points where the money was passed through, while a chief account was the central point where the money was actually gathered and originated from.

The voice phisher had to use the chief account to deposit money into Tae-hyuk's account.

"I will turn over as much information as possible and catch all the people that are in South Korea."

-Yes. This brat, I was just laying down watching TV, and now I have to work because of you.

"The special diligence will help when you get married."

Tae-hyuk ended the call with Kang-suk and used Voice Modulation again. He then said to the phishing scammer.

"How is it?"

-I have deposited the three million. Please check it as quickly as possible.

“Yes, I understand.”

Tae-hyuk went to the ATM and checked the bankbook.

There was a deposit for three million won.

Their account information was stamped as well, meaning the bank log would have their IP address.

Tae-hyuk ended the conversation with the voice phishing scammer and sent the information to Kang-suk.

He had earned himself three million won, while Kang-suk would be able to catch those voice phishing scammers in South Korea.

"I ate well."

And...



[Crime Skill: Voice Modulation has been acquired.]

-You can directly imitate the voice of the target.

-It is completely learnt.

‘Nice!’

He fully gained Voice Modulation, meaning that he could now use it without worrying about it ever disappearing.

‘I can directly imitate the voice of someone else... Isn’t this a good skill?’

He already came up with several useful ideas to use it.

Tae-hyuk showed a warm smile.

---

"I've finished, Noona."

"Oh. Tae-hyuk came."

“Huh? I thought you were watching a drama.”

"No, I prepared some rice for us to eat together when you got back."

“Oh, really? I am hungry after working so hard.”

"Did you study that hard?"

“... Wah, looks delicious.”

"Tae-hyuk, don't change the subject. Answer my question."

“I will eat it well. Oh right, Noona.”

“Huh?”

“Thank you.”

# Chapter 11 - Model Student Seo Tae-Hyuk???

---

“Yes! I will become a model student!”

Tae-hyuk lifted his head with an expression of enlightenment.

The most effective way to change the future was to change the present.

Then what was the easiest thing to do right now?

The answer was easy:

Become a model student.

‘Yes. Raise my grades and go to university. Isn’t that a different result than getting a job right after graduating high school?’

He would never enter Sungjin Group as a guard.

Tae-hyuk was burning with the will to study. All of a sudden, sparks burst around him.

Ppak!

“Stop talking! Come on! Do you think this is your house? Sleeping in class and then suddenly talking nonsense! Do you have

a complaint against me?”

His homeroom teacher, Jung Nam-ho, was standing in Tae-hyuk with the attendance sheet.

The man seemed ready for a barrage of strikes at any time.

Tae-hyuk rubbed his head where the attendance sheet had hit.

‘Freaking painful.’

It was fortunate that Robbery didn’t work when he was hit with something.

‘Uwah... When did class start?’

It seemed like some time had passed while he had been concentrating on his plan for the future.

“Why don’t you just take a break from school? You have already been absent five days this month. I wanted to see my student very much.”

He had been busy catching a killer and buying gifts for his sister.

He couldn’t say this to his teacher.

It was true that he had neglected his studies.

‘Um. I can’t do this. I will set up some countermeasures after I get out of this lesson.’

Tae-hyuk groaned and said,

“Ohh... I’m sorry. I think I have a cold. Can I go to the infirmary?”

"What did you say? A cold? You look totally fine! Are you faking right now?"

He was correct.

Jung Nam-ho was famous for not letting students leave school early.

However, Tae-hyuk had a skill.

‘If I use Voice Modulation...’

Tae-hyuk was reminded of an actor he had never met. He then manipulated the Demon Revealing Mirror.

[Voice Modulation has been used.]

-You can directly imitate the voice of Kim Bum-soo.

The national actor Kim Bum-soo!

He was a super famous actor who had become well-known after his role as a father with a terminal illness in a drama.

His dying performance had been almost at the level of a god.

At that moment, it was reproduced by Tae-hyuk.

"Cough! T-teacher-nim... Really. I feel like I'm dying."

It was a voice that seemed like he was about to cough up blood at any moment.

Voice Modulation didn't just end with changing the voice.

It copied a person's distinct accent or way of speaking. Any special skills related to the voice was also possible.

This was a fraudulent skill with endless utilization possibilities.

Voice Modulation was clearly on a different level in comparison to Robbery.

"Eh? Are you really sick? Where did you go that you would catch a cold? What a fool."

The entire class laughed at the words that came from Teacher Jung Nam-ho's mouth.

There was only one man who didn't laugh.

"Teacher-nim, ignore the fool who gave up on life and continue with the lesson."

"Ah, yes, Sung-kwang! Let's start the class!"

Jung Nam-ho's attitude changed by 180 degrees.

Park Sung-kwang was well-educated, and his father was a politician.

He was a model student who was different from the troublemaker Tae-hyuk, who had always skipped school.

In addition, his cold appearance and celebrity looks meant he was always popular with women.

The sounds of "kyaa!!" could be heard when he passed by.

Jung Nam-ho quickly found the class president.

"Class president! Take Seo Tae-hyuk to the infirmary."

"Yes, I understand,"

A frail voice answered.

An Eun-young, the class president, rose from her seat and approached Tae-hyuk.

She hesitated to reach out a hand to Tae-hyuk, who was a troublemaker.

"T-tae-hyuk... T-the infirmary, l-let's go."

She started stuttering due to her nerves.

'I'm sorry. I'm just feigning an illness.'

Tae-hyuk started to leave the classroom with An Eun-young's support. However, Park Sung-kwang's eyes made him uncomfortable.

It almost contained a killing intent.

'Um? Did I steal his money or something?'



Tae-hyuk had no contact with Park Sung-kwang.

Park Sung-kwang was the son of a politician and a model student. As such, he always had friends gathering around him.

He was the so-called influential figure.

In contrast, Seo Tae-hyuk had often skipped school due to his part time work.

In the end, he was treated as a troublemaker.

Even though they were in the same class, Tae-hyuk had never spoken with him before.

'Did I see correctly? He's looking at me right?'

Tae-hyuk walked slowly to the back of the class with An Eun-young's help.

Park Sung-kwang was looking at them with an almost predatory expression.

Tae-hyuk wasn't mistaken.

'...I've seen that gaze before.'

It was in the prison. Park Sung-kwang seemed like the guards when they looked at the inmates.

The distance between the two people was decreasing.

In the end, Tae-hyuk passed right by Park Sung-kwang.

At that moment, Tae-hyuk laughed and called out to Sung-kwang,

"Park Sung-kwang."

"....."

Sung-kwang looked into Tae-hyuk's eyes without saying anything, but a vicious contempt was seen in his eyes.

It was like he was irritated that Tae-hyuk was even breathing the same air as him.

Then Tae-hyuk said,

"Your fly is open."

Park Sung-kwang's expression distorted.

He realized that the zipper of his pants was open.

Tae-hyuk shrugged and walked out of the room with An Eun-young.

---

"Um, I think I'm okay now. I can go alone."

Tae-hyuk said as he left the classroom and turned off the Voice Modulation skill.

He instantly turned from a dying patient to a normal high school student.

"B-but... Teacher-nim..."

An Eun-young was a timid, petite girl.

So, it was inconvenient for him to move since he had to lean down to get support.

An Eun-young was a brilliant student who had never failed to get 1st place ever since she had entered the school.

She had a rivalry with Park Sung-kwang who was always 2nd place in the school.

Furthermore, her credibility with the teachers was high due to her sincere nature.

Thus, she had been in charge of the class since the 1st grade in high school.

‘In the end, didn’t she get into S University with a full scholarship?’

The nation’s top university.

For Tae-hyuk, it was just a distant story.

"Then let’s walk to the infirmary together. Will that be okay?"

"Eung..."

Tae-hyuk looked at An Eun-young’s back as he walked towards the infirmary.

At that moment, he came up with a good idea.

‘That reminds me, doesn’t she stay after school to teach other students?’

Her explanations were easy to understand, so her study group was very popular.

If Tae-hyuk wanted to go to university with his sister, he needed to raise his grades.

‘Yes, I should ask her to teach me.’

Then he would become a model student.

He thought about how he could ask it naturally.

As he was thinking about it, he felt a vibration in his pocket.

Brr!

‘Hiik!’

It was an unexpected situation, so he barely prevented himself from screaming.

It was the Demon Revealing Mirror.

‘What is it again?!’

[Seo Tae-hyuk]

---

-Title: God of Crime

-Rating: Commoner (Lacking conditions for upgrade)

-Skills Possessed: Robbery (Lv 1)

Voice Modulation (Lv 1)

???

Tae-hyuk's eyes widened.

It was an alarm announcing the emergence of a new skill.

There was only one thing it meant.

A crime was happening in the area.

At first, it was the pickpocket. The second was voice phishing.

Then...

Tae-hyuk thought of all the people he met today.

'It isn't Noona or Tae-min. Then... Teacher Jung Nam-ho or Park Sung-kwang. Also, An Eun-young.'

One of these people were associated with a crime.

Tae-hyuk swallowed his saliva. Unlike before, there were three candidates.

It would be easy to figure out if he knew what the crime was.

He looked at the Demon Revealing Mirror that only displayed '???' with resentful eyes.

His thoughts was complicated. He just wanted to become a model student.

'Still, it is better to have more skills. First, I should determine who the perpetrator is.'

However, An Eun-young's condition was strange.

"Uh, eung..."

She moaned as she started swaying and then began to fell.

If she hit then cement floor, she was likely to become seriously injured.

In the end, Seo Tae-hyuk didn't hesitate to grab An Eun-young.

Heavy!

He could feel something big that didn't fit her slender body.

‘She did look tired, but to think she would suddenly fall down...’

An Eun-young had dark circles around her eyes. He wondered if she had been staying up late in preparation for the exam next week.

It seemed possible for An Eun-young who was always studying.

[Robbery has been used.]

-You have succeeded in stealing the opponent's belongings!

‘Crazy!’

The probability of success for Robbery was 10%.

However, this time, it succeeded in just one go.

“T-tae-hyuk... S-sorry. I'm a bit tired these days...”



An Eun-young shook her head to get rid of the dizziness and stepped away from Tae-hyuk.

“It seems like you are the one who should go to the infirmary and rest. I’ll help you there.”

"I-I need to study..."

"You should take a break. You don’t want me to carry you there, do you?"

“.....”

An Eun-young nodded slowly.

After diverting her attention, Tae-hyuk placed a hand in his pocket.

“.....”

He could feel a soft cloth.

Fortunately, it was the top part.

‘I think I’m going to go crazy. Fuck. Why does it keep stealing things like this?’

It was a situation where he couldn't say anything, even if he was caught red-handed stealing.

‘If I get one more point, then I’ll be able to prevent this!’

The bigger issue was how to return it to the original owner.

Keeping it was a problem.

However, returning it was also a problem.

Tae-hyuk was distressed.

It felt like he reached a crossroad marked with Raccoon City and Silent Hill.

At this moment, his head was moving faster than Einstein’s.

‘Ah, I don’t know!’

Tae-hyuk felt like vomiting as he spoke to An Eun-young.

"Eun-young, you seem tired, so do you want to see a magic trick?"

“H-huh?”

Tae-hyuk placed his hands together like he was clapping.

When he opened his hands, white underwear appeared.

“Look! This is my alchemy!”

An Eun-young turned red the moment she realized what it was.

Peok!

She snatched the underwear and kicked Tae-hyuk’s leg with her shoe.

Then she literally ran away.

"I gave it back though. Ow..."

In this situation when he needed her help, it seemed like their relationship had deteriorated.

Tae-hyuk sighed slowly,

“...I’m screwed.”

# Chapter 12 - Model Student Seo Tae-Hyuk??? #2

---

"First of all, I will start with Teacher Jung Nam-ho."

No matter how thick-headed Tae-hyuk was, he couldn't start a fight with An Eun-young.

Tae-hyuk jumped over the wall and went shopping in the city. Binoculars, mini voice recorder... He bought a few simple props as well. Tae-hyuk was preparing to spy.

The funds came from the money he had received from the voice phishers a few days ago.

It would've been nice if he had a hidden camera or wiretapping device. However, it was difficult to obtain such things right now.

'Class should be ending right now.'

He needed to go to the school office and place the tape recorder on Teacher Jung Nam-ho's seat. Then he would recover it and listen to it after school.

By doing this, he would be able to get a clue as to if his teacher was involved in a crime.

'So, how can I get into the office?'

Actually, the real problem wasn't entering but making an exit.

"Tae-hyuk, what are you doing not going to school? Huh? You won't be able to graduate like this. The number of days you've attended is too low. This teacher is going crazy because of you. Also, you should study harder. The average of the class..."

The student adviser was very pleased when Tae-hyuk visited the office.

'What is this? It feels like confessing a crime at a police station...'

Tae-hyuk was able to safely place the tape recorder in Teacher Jung Nam-ho's seat.

However, he'd had to listen to the same words from the student adviser for two hours, over and over again. So, it was slightly saddening to hear it again.

Tae-hyuk listened to the lecture while watching Teacher Jung Nam-ho who was sitting a little bit away from him.

'He is having a phone conversation with someone. It smells fishy.'

"I will call your sister if there is one more unauthorized absence. Do you understand?"

‘Yes, bad breath!’

It seemed like the student adviser hadn’t brushed his teeth after eating cheonggukjang.

In the end, Tae-hyuk was only freed when school ended.

“You can go now. I hope that you will have a new start from tomorrow.”

‘I would like that as well, Teacher-nim.’

Tae-hyuk bowed his head and left the office.

Of course, he didn’t forget to take that tape recorder that he had planted.

‘Success!’

Tae-hyuk smiled widely as he listened to the recorded conversation.

It contained very conclusive evidence.

---

-Yes, then I'll meet you at six in the evening. Ah, that thing...  
Yes. Thank you!

“Hu...”

Tae-hyuk pulled out the earphones connected to the tape recorder and sighed.

The information was devastating.

It seemed like he was going to meet a student's parents after school at a restaurant in order to receive something.

There was only one crime that came to mind.

‘Even taking bribes is a crime.’

He had found the criminal easier than he had thought would.

Now, he had to get the new skill and use it to deal the criminal a big blow.

‘Still, I hadn't thought that Teacher Jung Nam-ho...’

Tae-hyuk had never imagined it.

His tone was harsh, but he seemed like a teacher who cared for

his students more than anyone else.

Indeed, it was truly impossible to know a person's mind.

‘I need to check to make sure.’

There might be a misunderstanding.

Tae-hyuk headed to the restaurant that was mentioned on the recording.

It was a luxurious traditional Korean restaurant.

Fortunately, the room next to Jung Nam-ho and the parents was empty.

Tae-hyuk sat there and ordered.

The price was more than 30,000 won per person.

All of a sudden, he remembered his sister who was eating at home alone.

"Please give me one vegetable bibimbap. In addition to that, can I have this two course meal wrapped to go? Oh, it isn't allowed? Here's a tip."



After putting down a 10,000 won bill, all types of packed food were prepared.

Tae-hyuk mixed his bibimbap and listened to the conversation next door.

“Thank you, Teacher-nim. Then please do it for my son.”

"I understand.”

"This isn't that much but...”

‘...For sure!’

Teacher Jung Nam-ho had received a bribe from the parents.

He lost his appetite.

It was like he was seeing the dark side of the world.

'Then did I learn a skill? What is the skill?

‘Hopefully it wouldn't be something like bribery or extortion.’

They might be useful, but he didn't want to learn such things.

‘Well, if I learn it, I should use it one day. Now, Demon Revealing Mirror, show me the skill!’

Tae-hyuk pulled out the Demon Revealing Mirror and looked for a new message.

There was nothing.

“What? Why is this? Is there something else?”

There was still a ‘???’ where the new skill should be.

It didn’t change even after Jung Nam-ho and the parents had left.

‘Perhaps, it isn’t Teacher Jung Nam-ho?’

He definitely received money, but it wasn’t a crime. Tae-hyuk had to interpret it that way.

Tae-hyuk decided to follow Jung Nam-ho to his next destination.

‘Yes, let’s go to the end.’

Tae-hyuk ran through the streets after the sun had set.

---

Jung Nam-ho bought two and fruits from a market in a poor area, then he headed somewhere.

Tae-hyuk knew that some people still used briquettes, but this was the first time he had actually seen it.

It was a strange feeling.

Even though he had lived in a semi-basement room until recently, he had never resorted to briquettes.

Jung Nam-ho stopped in front of an old house that seemed at least 50 years old.

“Aigoo, Teacher-nim. Why are you here?”

A grandmother came out and greeted Jung Nam-ho.

“Jong-min’s grandmother, you don’t need to come out. Won’t you be more comfortable in the house?”

“Jong-min went to work. I’m sorry, I am sick...”

“It’s nothing. When Jong-min comes home, tell him that I’ve stopped by. And this...”

Jung Nam-ho put down the briquettes and fruits at the door,

then he pulled out an envelope and gave it to the grandmother.

It was what the parents had given him.

"What is this...?"

"Take it, and tell Jong-min to come to school tomorrow. That kid, he doesn't study regularly. I will take responsibility for sending him to university. Please believe me."

"T-teacher-nim. Thank you."

The grandmother bowed to Jung Nam-ho.

Tae-hyuk was watching them from behind a wall.

'This is truly...'

Jung Nam-ho was the man that Tae-hyuk knew. Jung Nam-ho's mouth was rough, but he thought about his students more than anyone else.

That's why Tae-hyuk liked him.

He could smile even when he got hit.

Kim Jong-min was a student in the top 5 of the class. That

reminded Tae-hyuk, he hadn't come to school for the past few days.

Jung Nam-ho found out the reason and helped him without anyone knowing.

Obviously, it was a crime to receive a bribe. However, the Demon Revealing Mirror hadn't reacted.

It was a complicated feeling.

Tae-hyuk moved to a spot where he couldn't be seen by Jung Nam-ho.

The criminal wasn't Jung Nam-ho.

If so, that meant the criminal was among the remaining two candidates.

He was sure of it.

---

The next day, Tae-hyuk started to monitor what An Eun-young and Park Sung-kwang did all day.

An Eun-young looked like a frog facing a ghost every time she saw Tae-hyuk, which made him feel bitter.

‘This is my own fault...’

The magic was a bit too much.

The first thing he figured out was that An Eun-young studied all day.

It seemed like she was possessed by a ghost of studying.

She went to school at seven in the morning and prepared for everything they would learn that day. Even at recess, the English words never left her hands.

Then after school, she would stay until late to study.

If other students came to ask about something they didn’t know, she would teach them kindly.

There was no sign of even the slightest annoyance.

‘Really great.’

Tae-hyuk was full of admiration.

If there was a chance, he wanted to apologize and ask for help studying.

However, he needed to find the criminal first.

‘And Park Sung-kwang...’

He was the exact opposite of An Eun-young.

Park Sung-kwang only played all day.

He came to school just in time to avoid being late.

During class, he would chat with someone on his handphone without studying.

Still, his grades were very good, so the teachers pretended not to see it.

At the end of school, a driver in a deluxe foreign car would come to pick him up. He would take it to places like clubs and bars.

It was difficult to enter such places with a uniform, so he would change to plain clothes.

However, everything on his body screamed luxury.

‘Is the son of a politician that wealthy?’

Clearly, they shouldn't earn that much.

Tae-hyuk laughed bitterly.

Even though they were in the same class, Park Sung-kwang's world was completely different from the one that Tae-hyuk and Jong-min lived in.

Tae-hyuk confirmed that Park Sung-kwang played with a woman until his face turned red. It was dawn when he got home.

'Does he study at home?'

It was strange that he was able to keep the position of 2nd place in the whole school despite all of this.

Tae-hyuk pulled out the Demon Revealing Mirror.

Underage drinking was a crime, but there was still nothing in the Demon Revealing Mirror.

'Well, it isn't like I wanted to learn a drinking skill.'

He still couldn't find a clue regarding the crime.

However, he noticed something suspicious three days before the big test.



# Chapter 13 - Model Student Seo Tae-Hyuk???

## #3

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Due to the test preparations, An Eun-young's dark circles became even darker.

Park Sung-kwang's face was a mess due to an entirely different reason.

‘How much alcohol did he drink?’

Tae-hyuk and An Eun-young were in the classroom after school. Aside from them, only Park Sung-kwang was left.

An Eun-young was still studying hard, while Park Sung-kwang was lying face-down on his desk.

Tae-hyuk was pretending to do homework while keeping an eye on both people.

It was at that moment that the door opened and one of Park Sung-kwang's friends, Kim Jin-soo, entered.

However, it wasn't Park Sung-kwang but An Eun-young that he had business with.

"Class President! Teacher-nim has a task for you, so go to the second floor of the old teachers' building."

“...H-huh? Y-yes, u-understood.”

The old teachers' building was where special activities classes were held.

Unlike the rest of the school where students stayed behind after school was over, the old teachers' building was normally empty at this time.

Then why was Teacher-nim looking for her in such a place?

Tae-hyuk, who was listening to this, felt suspicious.

“He wants your help to organize something. Go quickly.”

An Eun-young nodded and left the classroom.

Kim Jin-soo then approached Park Sung-kwang, who was lying on his desk, and said,

“Sung-kwang, I did it.”

“Uh, yes. Ah, I had way too much to drink yesterday. Damn. Then shall we start the plan?”

Jin-soo pointed to where Tae-hyuk was sitting with uneasy eyes.

"What about him? He saw all of it."

Park Sung-kwang shook his head as he glanced at Tae-hyuk, who looked like he had no interest.

"You can ignore him. Anyway, he is a guy who gave up on life. If he notices something, I can just pay him some money."

"Is that so?"

"Then let's go."

Park Sung-kwang left the classroom, followed by Kim Jin-soo.

Seo Tae-hyuk's eyes shone as he pretended to study hard.

'Hoh. Look at those children.'

He had found a clue to the crime that he had been searching for.

Tae-hyuk followed behind the two people at a certain distance.

After a few minutes of walking, they arrived at their destination.

It was the old teachers' building.

It looked exactly like the set of a horror movie.

‘Wah... This atmosphere makes it feel like a ghost will pop out.’

It was so creepy that he didn’t want to enter it in the day. There was the smell of chemicals coming from the chemistry room. There were creepy biological specimens in containers filled with formalin.

Even the plaster casts in the art room gave off an ominous feeling when the sun had already gone down.

‘Can’t a full movie be filmed here?’

It was a place where even a man would scream in fear.

Buzz, buzz!

In the silence, the sound of voices could be heard.

‘Are they going to the second floor?’

Tae-hyuk walked carefully to the place where An Eun-young and Park Sung-kwang’s group was, making sure not to be noticed.

Creak!

Despite being as careful as possible, sounds were still heard from the old building.

‘This isn’t a school horror experience.’

As Tae-hyuk moved closer, he could hear a certain voice.

"I don't understand why you dislike it. Isn't this a good deal for Class President?"

Tae-hyuk arrived at the place where Park Sung-kwang's voice could be heard. He leaned forward and observed the situation.

Park Sung-kwang was talking excitedly with someone.

“B-but...”

"But what? You are being ridiculous."

"I-I... I have to be 1st."

“It is the same for me. Don't you know how upset my father is? There is no such thing as 2nd place for politicians. They are either elected or defeated. So, if I want to become a politician, I have to get 1st place. What the heck? That is discipline.”

“I-if you study harder then...”

"That is the problem! The 1st place classmate is someone who studies 20 hours a day. So, what can I do? Therefore, let's do something good for each other. Show me your answer sheet the day after tomorrow. Then get one question wrong. I will be in 1st place, and you will be in 2nd. Isn't that good? One million won. No, five million won."

"I-I don't want m-money."

Kwang! Park Sung-kwang punched the wall next to An Eun-young.

Tae-hyuk bit his lip as he listened to the conversation.

‘That’s it. The reason why he gets good grades despite playing all day.’

Park Sung-kwang spent money to cheat on all the tests.

It was at that moment...

Brr!

The Demon Revealing Mirror, which hadn't moved for a week, finally reacted to something.

[Crime Skill: Spying has been learnt.]

-You can see your opponent's belongings and stats.

-The criteria to learn it completely hasn't been met yet.

-It has been registered in the temporary skills window.

‘Spying?’

He could see the information of the desired target.

Just like Voice Modulation, it was a skill with endless utilization.

‘What the hell is Robbery then? What the heck? A landmine skill?’

Park Sung-kwang was cheating, and he was using indecent methods to do it.

Five big men were surrounding a small girl and intimidating her.

“It really doesn't make sense! Jin-sso, didn't I tell you to do some research on Class President? Tell me how to make her listen? Is it not enough money? Does she want more? 10 million won?”

“.....”

An Eun-young was tearful since the atmosphere made it seem like violence would erupt at any moment.

However, she still didn't accept Park Sung-kwang's offer.

"Well, there is a reason that Class President needs to keep her 1st place."

"What on earth? Tell me the reason."

Kim Jin-soo pulled out a notebook and started reading the contents written there.

"It was really hard to find this..."

"I understand. 200?"

Kim Jin-soo replied with a big smile,

"Yes, thank you! Then I will tell you. Class President's mother is in hospital for a blood cancer. What was it? Leukemia? Anyway, it is a condition where it is unknown if she will see tomorrow. Therefore, Class President made a promise with her mother."



"What?"

"She would study really hard and get 1st place in the school. So, her mother should work hard to get treatment as well."

"Puhaha! How ludicrous. Isn't it crazy? A last resort? Does she think her mother isn't going to die? Don't be like this. Class President, let's agree on 10 million won. You will need a lot of money for the funeral costs. Shouldn't you plan in advance?"

"U-uck, uwaaaaah!"

An Eun-young eventually burst out crying.

Park Sung-kwang cried out with annoyance,

"Ah, I'm going crazy. It really doesn't make sense. But Class President, do you want to know something? Your mother's life support device. What will happen if I unplug that cord? Aren't you curious?"

"U-uck... N-no, p-please don't. I-I'll do it. I'll do it so p-please..."

"Yes, good. Ah, right. It will be troublesome if you spread this around. So, I'll need some evidence to make Class President stay silent. Jin-soo, did you bring the camera?"

"Yes."

"Now, shall we have fun with a photo shoot?"

Park Sung-kwang laughed happily.

Tae-hyuk used a skill quietly.

[Voice Modulation has been used.]

-You can imitate the voice of Jung Nam-ho directly.

Tae-hyuk yelled out with Jung Nam-ho's voice.

"These children. What are you doing that you haven't gone home yet?"

Park Sung-kwang was surprised.

"Hey, you jerk. I told you not to be tailed! What are you doing?"

"Uh, t-this is strange... There was clearly no one."

"Fuck. Let's go!"

"What about Class President?"

"Leave her. Fuck. I'll need to ask my father for more money to buy her silence."

Park Sung-kwang disappeared into the darkness of the old teachers' building.

"Sob... Sob... T-teacher-nim..."

An Eun-young was sitting on the floor crying.

Tae-hyuk scratched his head as he approached An Eun-young.

"Did you think I was Teacher-nim? Sorry, it is Seo Tae-hyuk."

"...?"

Tae-hyuk first apologized to An Eun-young for the magic incident.

"That unbecoming incident... I'm really sorry."

"...Huh? ....Yes."

"Really."

Tae-hyuk emphasized it again.

“...By the way, why did you save me?”

An Eun-young was surprised to see a person she had never expected to intervene.

"I actually wanted to apologize, so I followed you in secret. Then I became witness to this by chance. Something like that?"

He followed her to apologize?

Moreover, he saved her.

An Eun-young realized that she was mistaken about the young man called Seo Tae-hyuk.

If he hadn't rescued her, she would have clearly suffered because of Park Sung-kwang's group.

Additionally, Tae-hyuk had seen everything that Park Sung-kwang tried to do to An Eun-young.

Even so, he did not say one word about it.

She felt so grateful.

He didn't ask if she was okay and just stretched out his hand.

An Eun-young grabbed Tae-hyuk's hand and got up.

The trembling in her body started to calm down.

"F-for saving me, t-thank you... By the way... Did you hear?"

"Well, yes."

"W-what are you going to do now?"

An Eun-young's judgment was quick. She understood the whole situation.

Once Park Sung-kwang realized he had been fooled by Seo Tae-hyuk, he would strike back.

Tae-hyuk exclaimed like he suddenly thought of something,

"Ah! I understand now."

"Eu? Huh? What?"

"No. Remember the other day when I caught a cold? Class

President was helping me. At the time, I thought Park Sung-kwang was glaring at me, but he was actually looking at you."

"There was something like that...?"

"In fact, I thought he liked me. When I didn't look at him, his affection turned into hate. Well, isn't it cool that the mysterious had been unravelled?"

"....."

An Eun-young stared at Seo Tae-hyuk with a dumbfounded expression.

'How could Tae-hyuk be like this?'

He had become the target of Park Sung-kwang, who had enormous power in the school. Didn't he understand?

An Eun-young formed tight fists. She didn't want the person who helped her to get hurt.

"Ah, right. Then what will I do now?"

"Yes. Actually, I'm a little worried about you..."

"He thinks he is a politician just because his dad is one. I need to

let him know that even politicians can be pierced by bamboo spears.”

"B-bamboo spears?"

“Yes. So, Class President should just drink soda and watch.”

Tae-hyuk laughed.

Even though it wasn't a dependable face, why did she feel this sense of relief?

An Eun-young's face turned red the moment she realized why.

# Chapter 14 - Having Too Much Of A Good Thing

---

“Ah, am I late?”

An Eun-young was hardly able to walk due to her shock.

In the end, Tae-hyuk had to piggyback her home. Her body was lighter than Tae-hyuk had expected, so he felt uncomfortable.

How could this small girl confront Park Sung-kwang?

In his memories, An Eun-young was just a sincere and hard-working model student.

Tae-hyuk sighed inwardly.

It was less of a return to the past and more of having memories of the future. He could take advantage of those memories.

However, that wasn't the end of it. Tae-hyuk learnt things he had never known before.

Teacher Jung Nam-ho helped his students in secret... And An Eun-young was fighting on her own.

Until now, Tae-hyuk had been a mere bystander. However, his



position had changed now, and he was jumping onto the stage out of his own free will. There was nothing else he could do except to fight.

Tae-hyuk looked at his watch.

His sister had told him not to go home too late. However, it was already past 10 in the evening. He had sent her a message, but she would worry if he was even later.

Tae-hyuk hurried forward.

“Uh, what are they doing?”

There was a strange shadow on the wall to an alley.

The person was wearing clothes that completely exposed the body.

It looked like a young woman...

“...Did she forget the keys to her house?”

Tae-hyuk shook his head.

He couldn't afford to worry about others things right now. His head was full of complicated thoughts just from thinking about An

Eun-young.

Tae-hyuk ignored the suspicious woman and headed home to where his sister was waiting.

---

“Tae-hyuk! Aren’t you going home? Classes are over!”

Jung Nam-ho asked Tae-hyuk, who strangely had remained in the classroom.

He didn’t seem to be sleeping with his eyes open...

It had been his routine to run off after lunch without waiting for school to end.

Seo Tae-hyuk scratched his head and replied,

“Ah, I have decided to study from today.”

Jung Nam-ho hit Tae-hyuk’s head with the attendance sheet.

“Ouch!”

“Strange. This isn’t a dream. Did I eat something bad at lunch today?”

“.....”

Tae-hyuk was at a loss for words. Was it that surprising that he had decided to study?

“Then work hard. I’m going.”

“Yes. See you tomorrow.”

After Teacher Jung Nam-ho left, An Eun-young moved and sat next to Tae-hyuk.

“Tae-hyuk, then... let’s start studying.”

“Uh, Class President. You’re not stuttering anymore?”

“Eung? Really?”

An Eun-young laughed gently.

The two people stayed behind because Tae-hyuk had asked for An Eun-young’s help with studying.

‘Well, I also want to stop Park Sung-kwang from touching her.’

The test was two days later.

Park Sung-kwang realized that he had been deceived and was now burning with hostility toward Tae-hyuk.

‘He didn’t do anything during the day due to his reputation, but it should now be time for him to approach.’

Tae-hyuk studied while waiting for Park Sung-kwang.

“Well, then I’ll check your skills.”

In order to teach someone, she first needed to know their skills.

An Eun-young made a test paper that mixed simple problems and difficult problems.

Tae-hyuk received it and concentrated.

“Um, I just solved what I knew. How about it?”

“Eung...”

An Eun-young gave a strange moan as she started to check the problems.

Then she spoke in an oddly angry voice,

“Tae-hyuk, you. Don’t you study?”

“Eek?”

“The problems that require application are a problem. However, the very basic questions are wrong. Normally, this means that you don’t study.”

“T-then I will try harder from now on.”

“Really? Then... I think I can help. However, you will need to give up on the next test. This is still your second year. If you work hard, you can get good results in the next test. First of all, mathematics...”

An Eun-young explained the curriculum to Seo Tae-hyuk.

She knew exactly what it took to improve his grades.

“As expected from Class President... Amazing.”

“I-it’s no big deal.”

An Eun-young shook her head with embarrassment at Tae-hyuk’s praise.

She tucked her hair behind her ears and started teaching him in earnest.

Tae-hyuk focused on An Eun-young's words.

Why was her face slightly flushed?

Was the classroom hot?

Approximately 30 minutes passed by.

All of a sudden, the Demon Revealing Mirror, that he had placed on the desk, rang.

[You have focused on studying.]

[You have been influenced by An Eun-young's Studying skill and your stats are rising quickly.]

[Intelligence has increased by one!]

‘Rising stats...?’

It was a message he had never seen before.

He wanted to examine it, but he felt sorry towards An Eun-young who was studying hard.

Tae-hyuk stretched and said,

“Let’s rest for five minutes.”

“Eung? It has only been 30 minutes... although you have worked hard. Shall we take a break?”

“Then I will go to the bathroom.”

“Eung.”

“Please note that it is a big one.”

“I didn’t ask!”

An Eun-young stood up and stretched. Tae-hyuk took the Demon Revealing Mirror with him and left the classroom.

---

‘Is it because I got the Spying skill?’

‘You can use the opponent’s ability and skills to spy on your belongings.’

In other words, he could see his own stats.

Tae-hyuk decided to try it on himself first.

[Spying has been used.]

[You can see your opponent's belongings and stats]

Along with the message about activating the skill, the abilities of 'Seo Tae-hyuk' popped up.

There was also a bag of belongings, but there was no reason to look at it.

[Seo Tae-hyuk]

---

-Title: God of Crime

-Rating: Commoner (Lacking conditions for upgrade)

-Skills Possessed: Robbery (Lv 1)

Voice Modulation (Lv 1)



Spying (Lv 1)

-Stats: Stamina (64), Intelligence (4), Agility (22), Dexterity (31)

[You can raise your stats by using affinity points.]

‘What is this...? F-fool!’

Tae-hyuk clicked his tongue.

Compared to his other stats, his intelligence was too low.

Moreover, this was after he had just gained one point.

He had only tempered his body, so his stamina was high.

‘I really have to study harder...’

It seemed like he had to take care of An Eun-young from now on.

Tae-hyuk thought about the message that had popped up previously.

‘The Studying skill...’

He learnt that crime skills weren't the only skills he could get.

An Eun-young didn't seem to have the same abilities as him. Did he have to study hard to get it?

‘Um. This time...’

He shone the Demon Revealing Mirror on An Eun-young in the classroom.

Then Spying was activated.

[An Eun-young]

-Title: Good Model Student

[The details aren't available due to your low rating.]

Tae-hyuk's eyes trembled.

‘Does she have a higher rating than me?’

If he was a commoner, An Eun-young had to be at least a noble.

Come to think of it, An Eun-young was very good at studying. She was first place in the school and her nationwide rank was quite high.

‘I don’t know her exact rating but maybe it’s ‘King’.’

‘Either way, I have to raise my rating if I want to use the skill properly.’

An Eun-young was the owner of the Studying skill. It was fortunate that he was getting close to her. He could easily increase his low intelligence stat.

‘Thank you, Class President! I will buy you a hamburger later!’

As Tae-hyuk was sending love calls to An Eun-young in his mind, someone approached him.

“Hrmm. You’re finally out.”

It was Park Sung-kwang.

‘Wah, has he been waiting outside until now? How sad. If I look closely, isn’t that snow piled up on his shoulders?’

Tae-hyuk thought with a serious expression.

“Haha. There is no need to panic. I don’t plan to do anything to you. Take a look, I am alone right now.”

“I wasn’t scared though?”

Park Sung-kwang’s eyes twitched.

However, he spoke with true superhuman patience,

“... Hum, hum. At any rate, it is good that you’re not making a fuss. I don’t know what you’ve heard. Despite my reputation, you can trust me. So, why don’t you receive some money for staying out of things?”

“Staying out?”

“I mean, stop hanging around Class President. Isn’t that more comfortable for both of you?”

It meant to leave An Eun-young’s side.

Tae-hyuk lowered his tone like he was worried.

“Money... I do need it.”

“Those are good words. 50... No, I’ll give you one million won.”

Tae-hyuk held up five fingers.

“I need this much?”

“Cough. Five million... You sure can make a bargain. Yes... I’m in a great mood, so...”

Tae-hyuk folded his fingers, leaving only his index finger that he shook back and forth.

“No, 500 million. Class President helped me with things I’ve been struggling to learn. Shouldn’t it be at least this much?”

“5... 500 million?”

It wasn’t five million but 500 million? That was 100 times the money.

“Puhahaha! Crazy. You are crazy. You’ll have to go round and round chasing for that money.”

Park Sung-kwang laughed.

“You seem to be mistaken about something. You think you’ve caught my weakness. This is a problem that I can solve on my own, without my father’s help. Yes. The negotiating is over.”

“Well, I guess so.”

“I will do everything I can to destroy you. From now on, it’s war, Seo Tae-hyuk.”

Park Sung-kwang declared and walked off.

Tae-hyuk laughed as he watched Park Sung-kwang leave.

Then he muttered in a low voice,

“This move turned out as nicely as I thought it would. Yeah, it should be like this. Now, who will be the one destroyed?”

In fact, Tae-hyuk didn’t have any special feelings or hostility towards Park Sung-kwang.

He was just an obstacle blocking An Eun-young from helping Tae-hyuk study.

However, the problem was different since he needed to obtain the Spying skill.

It was an essential skill.

In order to perfectly learn it, he had to stab Park Sung-kwang.

“Well, isn’t this Class President’s revenge? Let’s call it the tuition fee. Park Sung-kwang, sorry. Who told you to give me such a good skill?”

Anyway, it wasn’t the time to return to studying.

Park Sung-kwang had moved first.

Now, it was his turn.

Tae-hyuk apologized to An Eun-young and made a phone call.

“Senator’s secretary, Park Sung-hwan?”

The plan to destroy Park Sung-kwang had begun.

# Chapter 15 - Having Too Much Of A Good Thing #2

---

Park Sung-kwang's power was considerable since he was the son of a politician.

It was the day after he declared war.

Tae-hyuk felt it the moment he went to school.

The mood of the students had changed.

“...Seo Tae-hyuk. Is he late again?”

“Shh. Talk quietly. He's going to hear.”

“What does it matter if he hears? Will he bite my head off? Or beat me?”

“...T-that. Last night...”

“V-violent incident? Hiik!”

This was just at first glance.

Buzz buzz!



Many students on the road were talking about Seo Tae-hyuk. It was like he was a celebrity!

‘... That isn’t it. Also, aren’t the rumors about me spreading quicker than I initially thought?’

He had thought that at the least, it would take one more day for them to spread.

Tae-hyuk had become the worst gangster of the school overnight.

‘Conquering all the bad groups in the area. Bullying money from students in other schools. Using violence. Playing naughty pranks on girls passing by. ... I’m not some hero of a manhwa!’

All of this occurred in around half a day. It was ridiculous, but the students believed the rumors either way.

Tae-hyuk could guess why it spread so quickly.

Park Sung-kwang had probably used SNS (Korean social media) as a means to spread these rumors. He probably opened around half a dozen chat rooms, in which he freely slandered Seo Tae-hyuk. The rumors would then blow up by themselves as they were reinterpreted and spread to more people. It was repeated so many times that most of the students now knew of Seo Tae-hyuk’s bad deeds.

Tae-hyuk laughed bitterly.

‘He really is the same as his father.’

Manipulating public opinion using the media. Although there was no proof behind that claim, it was still a clever use of both technology and psychology.

Tae-hyuk was doing bad things. Even if someone didn’t believe that claim at first, their doubts would soon turn to conviction after hearing several people repeating it.

Park Sung-kwang had many friends, and put the money that came from being the son of a politician to good use. There were at least 10 people involved in this matter. That number was enough to incite most of the students in school.

Now no one would believe him if Tae-hyuk accused Park Sung-kwang of cheating.

‘I just wanted to be a model student. Isn’t this the opposite from what I wanted?’

Tae-hyuk licked his lips.

Furthermore, it was obvious that it wouldn’t end with just this.

‘Oh my god...’

A miracle was occurring as Tae-hyuk walked. Students parted in front of him like he was the plague. The situation was more serious than he thought.

Once he opened the door and walked in, the loud classroom suddenly became quiet. People started whispering in small voices; and although he didn't hear them, he knew what they were talking about.

Tae-hyuk walked to his seat and sat down, prompting the person next to him to increase the distance between their seats.

“.....”

He couldn't say anything.

“Tae-hyuk...”

An Eun-young, sitting in the seat in front of him, spoke in a small voice.

“... Is this Park Sung-kwang's doing?”

Tae-hyuk wiped at his eyes like he was moved.

“Do you believe in my innocence?”

“O-Of course! S-sorry. Because of me... Do you regret it now?”

‘I’m kidding... Why are you so serious?’

That was just in Tae-hyuk’s head.

Tae-hyuk didn’t hesitate as he replied to An Eun-young.

“What are you talking about? If I could travel back in time, then I would still save Class President.”

It was natural. It wasn’t uncommon to form connections with intelligent people.

“Huh...? Eu? Yes? Yes... I-I see.”

An Eun-young’s face instantly turned red.

She tried to answer but couldn’t speak. Then An Eun-young raised her finger like she suddenly remembered something.

“Ah, right. The student adviser said for you to go see him straight away...’

“Well. Maybe this incident has even entered the ears of the teachers. Either that, or Park Sung-kwang is planning to beat me.”

“L-Let’s go together...! I will tell Teacher-nim that Tae-hyuk did nothing wrong!”

Tae-hyuk shook his head.

“No. Recently I have become friendly with Class President.”

“Uh, yes. Friendly.”

“Then would they believe Class President’s claim of my innocence?”

An Eun-young was dumbfounded at Tae-hyuk’s words.

“S-Still!”

“I will go to the office now.”

“Then I’ll be waiting at the door!”

Despite his words, An Eun-young still wanted to come along.

Tae-hyuk chose not to refuse anymore.

---

Once he went to the office, the student adviser greeted him more angrily than usual.

“Tae-hyuk! Tae-hyuk! Tae-hyuk! Hey, you son of a bitch. Why did you do it? It has only been a few days since you promised to be reborn. Yes?”

“I’m not sure what you’re talking about.”

“You bastard! I know. I know it all! Don’t try to lie and deceive me. Tell the truth, and I will consider extenuating your circumstances.

“I really don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“This bastard... Denying it until the end! There was a witness, a witness! Did you think no one saw you when you hit a student last night? His leg was broken so badly that he has at least 12 weeks of recovery! I thought you were a good person who got into small trouble. Have I been deceived? Say something, you son of a bitch.”

Tae-hyuk couldn’t even laugh due to the sheer absurdity of the situation.

“I harmed a student?”

“Hah! It seems I was mistaken about you. Showing no signs of remorse and reflection after brazenly hurting someone. Who? Kim Jin-soo! I went to the hospital last night and saw him. He was

beaten half to death.”

“.....”

Tae-hyuk clenched his hands into tight fists.

He had thought that it was just a bunch of rumors. But someone was really hurt?

Kim Jin-soo, who had been fine just yesterday, was now in the hospital. What really happened?

‘Park Sung-kwang. You really went this far.’

He had broken the leg of his follower just to frame Tae-hyuk.

Tae-hyuk felt anger boiling inside of him.

“Ahyu. This shameless guy. In my heart, I want to make you exactly like Jin-soo. Yet, I’m very sad because I can’t. At any rate, a disciplinary committee will be held after the test tomorrow. This will probably result in a suspension or worse. By the way, I will be strongly arguing that you be expelled.”

“Is that so?”

The smile disappeared from Tae-hyuk’s face.

Expulsion. If An Eun-young wouldn't separate herself from him, then would they be kicked out of school together?

Tae-hyuk felt a fierce anger towards the man called Park Sung-kwang.

“You are still denying it like this until the end! Very well, you can go now.”

“Oh, by the way, Teacher-nim. Have you ever received a bribe from Park Sung-kwang?”

“Huh? What did you say?”

“Nothing. Keep up the good work.”

Tae-hyuk left the office without looking back.

---

An Eun-young, who had been listening to the conversation outside, looked like she was about to cry.

“T-Tae-hyuk... R-really. I'm s-sorry...”

Tae-hyuk smiled and stroked her head.



“No, I should be the one to say sorry. In fact, I even wanted to play this little game at first.”

“P-play?”

“But now, I think that I should go to war.”

He had planned to steal the test paper submitted by Park Sung-kwang and make him sit in the re-test alone.

But that wasn't enough anymore.

This was a dirty fight where one of the two people had to be finished.

Either Seo Tae-hyuk would be expelled, or Park Sung-kwang would be ruined.

“Hrmm. I thought something like this would happen after I threw the bait.”

Shortly after Park Sung-kwang had declared war, Tae-hyuk had called his father's secretary and laid a trap. If it worked properly, then it would be very fatal for Park Sung-kwang.

And...

Tae-hyuk explained his plan to An Eun-young.

Her cooperation was necessary in order for it to be successful.

“... I’ll give it a try. But will it really succeed? It seems to heavily rely on luck...”

Tae-hyuk replied in a confident voice.

“I will do it somehow. Believe in me.”

“Uh, yes. I trust you.”

‘Phew. I sound so irresponsible since she doesn’t know about the Demon Revealing Mirror. It is good that she still believes in me.’

Tae-hyuk inwardly sighed with relief. An Eun-young trusted him to such a strange degree.

Of course, he had no intention of betraying her.

“Then, shall I start the cheating?”

# Chapter 16 - Having Too Much Of A Good Thing #3

---

“Hahaha! Seo Tae-hyuk! You raised the white flag to surrender!”

Park Sung-kwang was delighted after hearing that Tae-hyuk wouldn't go against his cheating.

In fact, he hadn't imagined that he would lose so much money as well as a follower. However, in the end, he was able to get what he wanted. He was so delighted that it was almost unbearable.

Park Sung-kwang clicked his tongue and said,

“By the way, I am sorry. I can't cancel the expulsion. The water has already been spilled.”

“Ah, that? I'm okay. I can just transfer. But I would need a lot of money to move schools. I'll also need to buy a new uniform.”

“Well, giving you money... Haha. It seems like we are talking now. By the way, do you still want 500 million?”

“Oh, I'm sorry, that was a joke. I am happy with 500,000.”

“Hahaha! I'll forgive you. I am generous! If this doesn't leak, I will give you 2.5 million? How about it?”

“Is that okay?”

Park Sung-kwang called out to An Eun-young who was behind Tae-hyuk.

“Oh, Class President. You made a very smart choice. It would have been your turn next time.”

“.....”

“Oh, what a pity. I couldn’t take any photos. Well, lately... The composition technology is really great. Won’t it look completely real?”

Park Sung-kwang held his belly and laughed.

An Eun-young’s face turned white. She could imagine what the photos would show.

Park Sung-kwang stepped closer to An Eun-young, then he whispered in her ear.

“Isn’t there still a long time until graduation? Please take care in the future.”

He moved away from An Eun-young and grabbed Tae-hyuk’s collar.

Tae-hyuk just extended his hand.

“Give me the money as soon as possible. At any rate. Is this the establishment of a contract?”

Park Sung-kwang held Tae-hyuk’s hand and said,

“Well, I’ll deposit it straight away. I am thorough regarding deals.”

Tae-hyuk shook Park Sung-kwang’s hand with his right hand while his left hand manipulated the Demon Revealing Mirror.

‘I really didn’t want to use the points on this but... damn, I’ll bite you to your very bones.’

Tae-hyuk used the three affinity points he had saved up.

[Crime Skill: Robbery has gained a new attribute.]

[When a robbery occurs, you will have three seconds to choose the item you want.]

[The items owned by the other person can be checked by ‘Spying.’]

After confirming that the attribute was bought successfully, Tae-hyuk used Spying. He confirmed that Park Sung-kwang had the item he wanted.

Tae-hyuk sent a signal to An Eun-young.

“Kyak!”

As promised, she pretended to fall and pushed him to the ground.

“Class President must have been nervous. Can you lend a helping hand?”

Tae-hyuk scratched his head like he was uncomfortable.

“Well, it was a mistake.”

[Robbery has been used.]

-Please select the item you want to steal!

A variety of items came up.

He quickly selected the desired item and activated the skill.

‘This time, it will be a success! Fighting!’

-You have succeeded in stealing the opponent’s belongings!

‘Yes!’

Tae-hyuk cheered inwardly.

Park Sung-kwang said,

“Then I will explain how Class President should show me your answer sheet.”

A corner of his mouth went up, and he started to laugh.

‘How long can you laugh?’

Everything that Tae-hyuk needed was gathered. Now was the time for a counterattack.

Park Sung-kwang’s cheating method was simple. An Eun-young’s job was to place her answer sheet on her desk before the test ended. He would take care of the rest of the cheating himself.

‘It is like Mission Impossible.’

Tae-hyuk clicked his tongue.

Park Sung-kwang seemed to know what he was doing. He had installed a miniature surveillance camera on the ceiling above An Eun-young’s desk. Then someone would look and report it to him.

‘The camera must be expensive.’

It needed to be able to see the letters on the answer sheet clearly from a distance, so it was impossible without an ultra-high resolution.

Park Sung-kwang always wore glasses that didn’t have any prescription lenses. Tae-hyuk had thought it was just for his intelligence image. However, it served as the receiver of a radio.

‘It is quite rational.’

The most critical thing about cheating was if the answer sheet showed the wrong information.

Of course, it didn’t matter if the person was trustworthy. However, half of the people had been coerced through intimidation. There was a possibility they would give wrong information in the desire to die together.



So, he had to block it.

It was time for An Eun-young to show Park Sung-kwang the test paper as instructed. However, she was still concentrating on the paper.

Park Sung-kwang, who was sitting behind Tae-hyuk, started to feel nervous.

‘Class President is doing well.’

Park Sung-kwang couldn’t imagine that An Eun-young taking her time was part of Tae-hyuk’s plan. It was to make him feel urgent so he would make rushed decisions.

It was seven minutes before the end of the test. Three minutes after Park Sung-kwang instructed, An Eun-young placed her answer sheet by a corner of the desk.

There was a sigh of relief from behind Tae-hyuk.

‘Park Sung-kwang. It seems like you are sitting behind me so that I can’t do anything stupid. I bet you never thought it would be an outer shell.’

Tae-hyuk had decided the location in advance, and Park Sung-kwang and his friends were currently not sitting in their usual seats. Tae-hyuk’s seat, which was originally a little further away, was now right in front of Park Sung-kwang.

In the end, the test was over.

Park Sung-kwang succeeded in copying An Eun-young's answer sheet perfectly as planned.

The supervising teacher announced the end of the test.

“People sitting in the back, please pick up all the answer sheets.”

Tae-hyuk looked at his answer sheet.

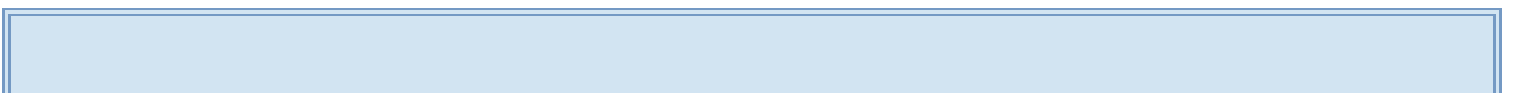
It was marked with the attendance number of Park Sung-kwang.

‘Now, it is showtime!’

Tae-hyuk deliberately bumped into the person walking with the answer sheets...

And the Robbery skill was triggered. Park Sung-kwang's answer sheet had already been collected. This was what Tae-hyuk had been aiming for.

His new attribute that he had spent three affinity points on surfaced.



[Robbery has been used.]

-Please select the item you want to steal!

Most of the list were answer sheets. Tae-hyuk picked Park Sung-kwang's.

‘Damn. Failed!’

Tae-hyuk bought himself some time without feeling embarrassed.

“Hey, why aren't you apologizing for bumping into me?”

“T-that, Tae-hyuk...”

“What, did I do something wrong?”

Then he bumped into the other person a few times on purpose. He really seemed like a gangster. Well, his image was already lost. So, he decided to use everything available.

The students who were watching clicked their tongues. In the end, he managed to steal what he wanted after three attempts.

Park Sung-kwang's answer sheet was in his pocket. He succeeded

in secretly stealing Park Sung-kwang's answer sheet and no one in the class noticed.

‘Will the success rate go up if I increase dexterity?’

It seemed like he had to raise both intelligence and dexterity.

Then with a casual expression, he handed out the answer sheet marked with Park Sung-kwang's attendance number.

Park Sung-kwang's answer sheet in his pocket was quickly changed to Tae-hyuk's own number with corrective tape. Then he handed it to An Eun-young, who was collecting the test papers in the next column.

One sheet missing from one place. An extra one in another. However, no one was aware because the teacher was collecting everything into one pile. This process was repeated for all the subjects.

So, An Eun-young's answer sheet was copied by Park Sung-kwang. It then became Seo Tae-hyuk's answer sheet.

As for Tae-hyuk's...

‘Sung-kwang, I was learning the basics and didn't even study for this exam. There will be a lot of water falling on my answer sheet.’

The test results came out one week later. It was also the same day that Tae-hyuk's disciplinary committee would be held.

Tae-hyuk licked his lips.

‘What will happen if the second ranked person in the school suddenly broke down? I am looking forward to it. Also, there is still one more step.’

He wasn't going to finish it with just this much.

The game was just starting.

# Chapter 17 - Having Too Much Of A Good Thing #4

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It was the anticipated day when the exam results would come out.

Understandably, everyone was interested in the rankings of An Eun-young and Park Sung-kwang. After entering the school, the two people had always occupied the first and second places.

Who would be ranked first in the whole school this time?

“I think that Sung-kwang will win this time. These days, his rankings have been very high.

“But can he overcome the wall that is An Eun-young? On the last test, she got an average of 98 points. ...The god of studying. Totally.”

“But it seems that Eun-young didn’t prepare much for the test because she was teaching Seo Tae-hyuk.”

“No, Class President is eternally....”

“...Park Sung-kwang!”

“...An Eun-young!”

There was a fiery argument in the classroom.

“Hey! Be quiet! The results you’ve been waiting for have come out!”

The front door of the classroom had opened and Teacher Jung Nam-ho had entered. There was a big smile on his face.

Teacher Jung Nam-ho started to give out the report cards in the order of the attendance number.

People who got the desired result were cheerful. Those who got lower than they had expected sighed.

“Park Sung-kwang.”

It was Park Sung-kwang’s turn.

He was confident that he was first in the school, so he walked forward with a smiling face. However, the atmosphere was weird, and Teacher Jung Nam-ho had a concerned expression.

“... Is something going on at home?”

“Huh?”

Park Sung-kwang asked with a puzzled expression.

“Aiyah. We need to do something about this.”

“.....”

Park Sung-kwang felt like something was unfortunate as he returned to his seat with the report card.

Then he cursed as he opened the envelope.

“...Shit.”

‘Seventh overall.’

He was a person who had only ever been first or second. It was a satisfactory achievement.

If there was a problem, it was that he had always been behind someone.

Wooduk!

Park Sung-kwang grinded his teeth together.

There was only one reason for this outcome:



An Eun-young. That bitch had backstabbed him. He had copied An Eun-young's answer sheet. So, it seemed like she had sacrificed her own grades. An Eun-young would be seventh place as well. Park Sung-kwang glared at An Eun-young, thinking about how to get revenge.

An Eun-young soon received her report card. Teacher Jung Nam-ho's chest puffed up like he was proud.

“An Eun-young! The first in the school! You've worked hard! Go home and rest!”

An Eun-young smiled gently and bowed toward Teacher Jung Nam-ho.

Park Sung-kwang's eyes widened.

‘First in the school?’

It couldn't be.

He had obviously copied An Eun-young's answer sheet exactly. So, why was there a different result...?

“And there is someone else I have something to say to. Tae-hyuk! Come out!”

Seo Tae-hyuk, who had been sitting quietly in his seat until then, walked forward.

Teacher Jung Nam-ho embraced Tae-hyuk enthusiastically.

“I was really surprised! Another first place student came from my class! Tae-hyuk! What did I say? I knew you could do it!”

“T-that is ridiculous!”

“Seo Tae-hyuk is first place?”

“Lies!”

The students fell into a panic at Teacher Jung Nam-ho’s words. They knew that he had been studying hard with Class President. Still, it was the first place in the school. He was a gangster who was soon to be expelled.

Tae-hyuk said,

“Well, the problems came from the parts that Class President taught me. I was lucky.”

“Hey! Well done! Really well done! But what is with that face?”

Teacher Jung Nam-ho pointed to the bandage stuck to Seo Tae-

hyuk's face.

“Oh, this? You will soon find out.”

It was like someone had injured him.

It was at that moment...

“Seo, Tae, Hyuk!”

Park Sung-kwang rushed toward Tae-hyuk with a demonic expression.

He grabbed Seo Tae-hyuk by the collar and dragged him out.

“You guys! Hey! Park Sung-kwang!”

Teacher Jung Nam-ho moved forward, but it happened so quickly that he couldn't stop Park Sung-kwang.

---

Park Sung-kwang dragged Seo Tae-hyuk to the school rooftop.

He didn't know exactly what had happened.

However, one thing was for certain—that bastard Seo Tae-hyuk

had a hand in it.

“How dare you fuck with me?”

Tae-hyuk cocked his head with a puzzled expression.

“What are you talking about?”

“Denying it until the end! Dog scum. I don’t know how you did it, but you changed my answer sheet to yours!”

Tae-hyuk spoke while peering at the wristwatch on his right wrist.

“You were sitting behind me when doing the test. Wouldn’t you notice if I did anything weird?”

It made a lot of sense.

Obviously, Seo Tae-hyuk hadn’t done anything suspicious when he took the exam.

“... Wait. You clearly fought with the student who was collecting the papers. I thought you had just gone crazy from the stress. My answer sheet was taken at that time!”

Tae-hyuk spoke like it was unfair.

“Did you see me lay a finger on the answer sheets?”

“No! It had to be then! Tell me! What did you do?”

Tae-hyuk once again looked at his watch to confirm the time.

“I really didn’t do anything.”

“This dog scum. Do you think you will be safe if you do this? My father is a politician!”

Park Sung-kwang was sincerely heated up. He was irritated that Seo Tae-hyuk was acting so calmly in front of him. He would use a group of gangsters under his father’s influence. It would ease his heart to aim them at Seo Tae-hyuk.

“Well. Is it that time?”

“What, time?”

Park Sung-kwang realized something strange.

Since earlier, Seo Tae-hyuk had seemed to be wasting time. He had also been checking the time with his wristwatch. Additionally, Seo Tae-hyuk had a bandage on his face. It seemed like someone had injured him.

However, Park Sung-kwang never touched Seo Tae-hyuk.

So, who did it...?

Seo Tae-hyuk licked his lips and said,

“Oh, this cut on my face?”

He peeled back the bandage to reveal a bruise like someone had beaten him.

“I had to concentrate on playing the role. Is this called method acting?”

“Acting?”

“Yes, it will be starting soon.”

Tae-hyuk’s watch was pointed at exactly 9.30.

Suddenly, something was broadcasted around the whole school.

-Seo, Tae, Hyuk! You son of a bitch!

Park Sung-kwang's angry voice was heard from the broadcast. Then there was a noise like someone was fighting.

Peok!

There were the sounds of someone being beaten.

-I—I won't cooperate with your cheating no matter how much you beat me up!

This time it was Seo Tae-hyuk's voice.

The human imagination was great. They only heard a few voices and some sound effects, yet the scene appeared vividly in front of their eyes.

Park Sung-kwang's fist slammed into Seo Tae-hyuk's face.

Tae-hyuk certainly heard it this way. He muttered with a satisfied expression.

“Well, Eun-young did it correctly.”

“What? Broadcast? Why is it my voice? What the hell?”

Park Sung-kwang panicked. It was his voice and not someone else's that was being broadcasted.

-I told you to change your answer sheet with mine. Are you resisting now? I'll kill you!

-S-still. My grades have been low since doing this for you! Additionally, framing me for that beating... I can't take it anymore!

-Stupid bastard. I am the ruler of this school, yet you're rebelling against me? I will make this your memorial day!

Park Sung-kwang was stunned as he listened to the broadcast from the roof.

It detailed that he had changed his grades by intimidating Seo Tae-hyuk, who was very good at studying.

Of course, he did something similar, but it wasn't with Seo Tae-hyuk. Additionally, he had tried to kick Tae-hyuk out of school by framing him for a fight.

Such contents were being broadcasted.



Tae-hyuk spoke with a face of admiration,

“Oh, this part! I did it, but it doesn’t seem real. ‘For the sake of justice, I can’t endure your wickedness any longer!’ Wah... Don’t I have a talent in acting?”

“This bastard!”

Park Sung-kwang knew that the broadcast was being manipulated. He didn’t know how his voice had gotten on there, but that didn’t matter.

Right now, he was a great villain who had threatened Seo Tae-hyuk to cover up his actions. He lost everything he had built in the school.

This had to stop.

Park Sung-kwang decided to use his greatest weapon.

“... Don’t you know that my father is a politician? Stop the broadcast and explain that everything was a misunderstanding. Otherwise, I will turn you and your family into mince meat with my father’s gang.”

It was a violent threat. Furthermore, Park Sung-kwang had the ability to carry it out.

Suddenly, Tae-hyuk sighed.

“Why, are you feeling regret?”

“No, your words are truly amazing.”

Tae-hyuk looked at the Demon Revealing Mirror. When he came to the rooftop, he had used Spying.

Until one minute ago, these words had been written in Park Sung-kwang’s title.

‘Son of politician Park Seong-ho.’

However, that was now empty. What this meant was...

“I know what a great person you are, but I will say this—it is nothing. Your title... The words you use to represent yourself... That is now empty.”

Park Sung-kwang was confused. He couldn’t understand Tae-hyuk’s words at all.

Tae-hyuk laughed bitterly.

“In the end, you—Park Sung-kwang, the son of politician Park

Seong-ho—disappeared from this world a minute ago.”

At the same time, the country was in an uproar.

# Chapter 18 - Having Too Much Of A Good Thing #5

---

36 hours before he implemented the test swap plan that required the use of his crime skills.

Tae-hyuk met the secretary of Park Seong-ho at a coffee shop.

“Yes, so you wanted to know what it is like to be a politician’s secretary?”

“Yes.”

“If you have any questions then please, feel free to ask. I am a sunbae in your department, and this isn’t a particularly difficult request.”

Tae-hyuk bowed and spoke his appreciation.

“Thank you, Sunbae-nim!”

“By the way, you are part of the political science department at K University, correct?”

“Yes. I am student number 15.”

“Haha! A freshman. At first glance, I thought you were a high

school student.”

Tae-hyuk awkwardly scratched the back of his head.

“Sunbae-nim also looks very young. I heard that you were student number 97.”

“Well, I am but a complete fossil. Then, shall we start the interview?”

Tae-hyuk approached the secretary as a political science university student seeking an interview.

This was all in order to obtain the secretary’s voice. In order to imitate a voice using the Voice Modulation skill, he had to meet someone and directly listen to their voice. The skill couldn’t be activated through a recording or a phone call.

The interview took around 20 minutes.

The secretary was currently showing a very pleasant expression, an aftereffect of meeting a hoobae from his university.

Tae-hyuk had one final question.

“Finally, there is something I always wanted to know. If the politician did something morally wrong, what should the secretary do?”

The secretary's eyes widened in response, as if he was surprised by the unexpected question.

He sat in the chair and thought hard.

“A secretary is a senator's hands and feet. Even if he commits any wrongdoing, it is still right to follow him silently. In some cases, senators will amputate their arms if need be. However, I am talking to my cute hoobae who wants to become a secretary, so that isn't a realistic answer. I'll try to mix in my own opinions as well.”

The secretary took a sip of his sugarless, bitter black coffee.

He seemed to be looking somewhere into the distance, instead of at Tae-hyuk who was currently sitting in front of him.

“Yes, a secretary is the senator's hands and feet; however, I think secretaries should also have a conscience that is able to judge wrong from right. If the senator is walking down the street in the wrong direction, it is the secretary's job to inform them so. Anyways, that's just my personal opinion. A secretary's words might just fall on deaf ears.”

The secretary laughed softly.

“No. I have definitely learned a lot from you today. Thank you.”

Tae-hyuk bowed, fully displaying his gratitude. The secretary laughed, and seemed to like it.

“Then, should I buy you dinner this evening?”

Tae-hyuk made an apologetic expression and said.

“... Really, I must thank you very much, but I still need to submit my report by tomorrow.”

“I see. It has been a long time since I’ve even thought about university. It was great to see you. Please call at the next opportunity and I’ll be sure to have a drink with you.”

“Yes, I understand.”

The secretary left the cafe with a regretful expression.

Tae-hyuk remained in his seat and took out a notebook from his bag. The word, ‘blacklist’, was written on the front cover in neat handwriting. It was a book that contained the names of 120 criminals. The book depicted the crimes they committed and detailed how they got caught. Tae-hyuk wrote down all of the things he remembered from those 15 years. A book that contained future events.

It was one of the two weapons that Seo Tae-hyuk had.

“Well. Let’s see...”

Tae-hyuk found the page he was looking for near the end of the notebook.

Blacklist NO.117, Park Seong-ho. A politician who committed numerous wrongdoings since becoming a senator.

It would happen approximately two years from now. Due to the secretary’s declaration of conscience, most of the senator’s crimes were revealed, and he went to prison.

The charges ranged from bribery to the instigation of murders. Still, Park Seong-ho only received a jail sentence of four years, of which he only served one. He was released on parole for the other three on good behaviour.

Tae-hyuk had never met Park Seong-ho. Park Seong-ho had a great deal of prestige within the prison. It was less like he was staying in a prison, and more like he was staying at a luxury hotel.

However, Tae-hyuk clearly remembered the day that Park Seong-ho was caught. Not only did he commit numerous acts of corruption, he also did not hesitate to use gangs to eliminate any in his way.

Eventually, all of his sins were revealed by his secretary, who couldn’t stand doing the dirty work for the senator any longer. The raised dog had risen to bite his own leg.



“Park Seong-ho’s secretary... No, student number 97 of K University’s political science department, Lee Ki-hwan. You will commit numerous evil deeds in the next two years, until you can’t tolerate the weight of your sins, and make a declaration of conscience in the end. Before that happens, I will make you a loyalist.”

Tae-hyuk changed his voice to Lee Ki-hwan’s using Voice Modulation. He then pulled out Lee Ki-hwan’s phone that he had stolen during the interview. There was a number that he called and hung up on several times a day.

What was Lee Ki-hwan thinking as Tae-hyuk now held this? All Tae-hyuk was doing now was profiting off of Lee Ki-hwan’s efforts.

“Hello. I was to make a report to the press director. Yes, I am Park Seong-ho’s secretary, Lee Ki-hwan.”

Tae-hyuk was just doing what Lee Ki-hwan would’ve done several years later.

---

Park Sung-kwang flopped onto the ground with a flustered expression, a smartphone with DMB functionality in his hands. All channels were broadcasting about Park Seong-ho.

The current situation was like an onion. The more someone peeled, the more that was revealed.

“T-This can’t be... F-Father...”

“Wah, he played very nicely with the leader of a crime syndicate.”

“No way, perhaps...”

Park Sung-kwang stared blankly at the sky, unable to believe the reality revealed in front of him.

At that moment, a spark formed in his eyes.

“Seo. Tae. Hyuk! This was all done by you! I will kill you!”

“How? Will you do it directly?”

Park Sung-kwang called out to his subordinate.

“Kim Jin-soo! Where are you? Come out right now...!”

Tae-hyuk shook his head.

“He broke his leg, so why are you looking for him so urgently?”

“Kuook!”

Park Sung-kwang made a sound that was a cross between a moan and a scream, and charged towards Tae-hyuk in despair.

“Aigoo. Be careful, this place is the roof.”

He lost his temper and tried to hit Tae-hyuk with his fists, who narrowly dodged them.

They slightly scraped Tae-hyuk’s side, triggering the Robbery skill.

[Robbery has been used.]

-Please select the item you want to steal!

Tae-hyuk manipulated the Demon Revealing Mirror and chose Park Sung-kwang’s waistband.

It seemed that he was lucky, or that his opponent just had bad luck. Robbery had succeeded on the second attempt.

“Kuhuk!”

All of a sudden, Park Sung-kwang’s pants fell down. He couldn’t move properly because his legs were trapped.

“I think you should give up.”

However, Park Sung-kwang didn't give up, and forced his body to move as he aimed at Seo Tae-hyuk.

“Aaaaaaack!”

But in the end, his body lost its balance and he fell onto a fence that was set up around the perimeter of the roof.

Kung!

The fence was unable to endure the weight of a human and started to fall. It should have been able to endure the weight of three or four humans. This was the result of bad construction due to politicians being bribed.

Kiiiiik!

“Aaaaack!”

Park Sung-kwang shrieked as his body started to fall to the ground along with the fence. If he fell, then he would die.

Tae-hyuk clicked his tongue.

He grabbed Park Sung-kwang's collar and pulled him up onto the rooftop.

“You haven't paid your dues yet. You shouldn't die like this.”

Tae-hyuk had received only one million won from Park Sung-kwang. The rest would be paid after the test results came out.

“Well, I don't think you will be able to give it to me.”

Park Sung-kwang's legs had collapsed out of the fear of death. The area around his groin had become damp, and he was literally stunned.

News about Park Seong-ho was spewing from the smartphone dropped onto the roof. An arrest warrant was issued and a full-scale investigation had begun.

Tae-hyuk formed a finger gun with his hand, and pointed towards Park Sung-kwang, who had fainted.

“Bang!”

---

“T-Tae-hyuk, are you okay?”

An Eun-young asked with a concerned expression.

“Ouchh!”

Tae-hyuk was sitting on a bed in the infirmary, holding an ice pack to his swollen face.

Although the situation was somewhat clear, it didn't exactly end well.

Park Sung-kwang was rushed away in an ambulance. Despite the opposition of Jung Nam-ho, a disciplinary committee was held for Tae-hyuk. The result was a one month suspension and 40 hours of community service.

Causing a disturbance in the broadcasting room. School property damage. Committing violence. These were his crimes.

“... Well, I didn't think I would be proclaimed innocent even with the broadcast.”

“B-But...! Tae-hyuk didn't do anything wrong!”

Tae-hyuk laughed.

Rather, things had worked out pretty well.

Seo Tae-hyuk had achieved first in the test results. Almost all the teachers, except Jung Nam-ho, suspected that there was cheating

going on. In the end, they decided on a retest. Of course, if he took the test now, then his average would be around 70 points. However, Tae-hyuk was suspended from tomorrow on. The retest would be taken a month later.

“Well, it is okay since I got revenge for Class President. Instead, I want to ask you something. Please help me study in the next month and in the future.”

An Eun-young tearfully said.

“O-Of course! I’ll teach you!”

How much could An Eun-young, the owner of the studying skill, raise his grade in one month?

One thing was certain, he would study until he died.

Tae-hyuk smiled.

Although he couldn’t get everything he wanted, he decided to be satisfied with this much.

More than anything else.

‘I no longer need to steal any more strange things!’

He had used three affinity points on an attribute for ‘Robbery.’ If the skill was accidentally activated, then he could decide what to steal.

“Tae-hyuk. I’ll wipe off the blood on your mouth.”

“Ah, I’m sorry. Please.”

An Eun-young grabbed a towel and approached Tae-hyuk.

“Kyak!”

At that moment, An Eun-young tripped on the bed sheet that had trailed to the ground.

Of course, she fell onto Seo Tae-hyuk who was sitting on the bed, resulting in An Eun-young’s body laying on top of him.

“Kuaaaaak! I suddenly fell!”

An Eun-young shrieked and her head hit Tae-hyuk’s.

He smelled something faintly sweet.

[Robbery has been used.]



-Please select the item you want to steal!

‘.....’

Tae-hyuk removed An Eun-young from his side and pulled out the Demon Revealing Mirror.

-Underwear (Top)

-Underwear (Bottom)

-S...

Tae-hyuk inwardly screamed.

‘No! It still hasn’t changed under these circumstances!’

If he didn’t pick something in a hurry, then he would end up stealing something random. Tae-hyuk chose the top option.

An Eun-young was lying next to him and couldn’t understand the situation.

Tae-hyuk called out her name.

“Eun-young.”

“... Uh, yes?”

“Do you want to see magic once more?”

“Kyaaaaak!”

An Eun-young’s face turned red as she understood what he meant.

---

An Eun-young’s information came up on the Demon Revealing Mirror that Tae-hyuk had thrown on the bed.

[An Eun-young]

-Title: A Model Student in Love

[The details aren’t available due to your low rating.]

A single word had completely changed the meaning, but Tae-hyuk had no idea about it.

# Chapter 19 - Criminals

---

Seo Tae-hyuk had two secrets.

One was that he had lived for 15 years longer than other people his age. Of course, those 15 years weren't exactly happy.

He was framed and went to jail. He lived in fear of the death penalty. Every day in prison seemed like hell. The memories of those times were still in his head.

However, Seo Tae-hyuk now considered himself a 'high school student', rather than a 'death row inmate.' It was good in some ways.

What if it wasn't just the previous memories that were still in his head, but the previous personality as well? If it were so, he would be in a mental hospital, not a school.

Another secret of his was the fact that he could use his 'crime skills.' Tae-hyuk manipulated the Demon Revealing Mirror to show his current skills.

He had currently acquired three crime skills.

Robbery, his first skill. He could steal the items of anyone that he bumped into. He had used affinity points to upgrade the skill, making it so that he could select which item to steal.

Voice Modulation, his second. A skill that could perfectly imitate the voices of others.

Finally, Spying, his third, which he could use to see the abilities and titles of others.

‘These skills...’

There weren’t just crime skills in existence. As he could see from An Eun-young’s example, there were other skills out there. That alone meant one thing – that the talents and abilities of individuals were shown in the form of skills.

If so, it was odd.

‘Why am I able to use crime skills?’

He only had three at the moment, but he would be able to learn more in the future.

He was suspicious of his title. Tae-hyuk clicked on the title in the Demon Revealing Mirror, and an explanation came up.

[God of Crime]

-You can make use of all criminal skills.

Somehow, it seemed like he could learn and use the skills of other criminals due to his title.

However, the ability was based on his rating. Currently, Tae-hyuk was a Commoner. It was the lowest rating, so there were various of restrictions.

Tae-hyuk confirmed the new upgrade conditions.

[Create a blacklist, 1/1]

[Secured the people on the blacklist, 3/20] [Make all stats over 50 points.]

If he cleared all three of these conditions, then he could raise his rating. He would be able to do more once he upgraded to a Noble.

Tae-hyuk knew his future. If he did nothing and sat idly, then the same reality that he previously experienced would be repeated. He would be framed again and would go to jail for the second time. His sister Ha-ran and younger brother Tae-min would receive the same tragic ends.

However, if he changed the present, then the future would also change. Tae-hyuk had caught one of the people on the blacklist, Yoo Cheol-ho, and saved the lives of three people.

It was clear that this could also be applied to himself.

“Then first of all, I need to upgrade my personal rating.’

Currently, he had only secured three people on the blacklist.

However, hundreds of people still remained. Among those on the list were terrorists who killed hundreds of people, as well as the leader of a pseudo-religion cult with thousands of believers.

Confronting them with his current set of skills was impossible.

‘I need the ability to catch people on my blacklist. However, don’t I need to catch people on the blacklist to get an upgrade? It is like employers not hiring inexperienced workers. This is just a painful regression!’

Tae-hyuk decided to do what he could first. There was still one upgrade condition apart from the blacklist, and that was to raise his stats above a certain threshold.

These were Tae-hyuk’s current stats.

Stats: Stamina (63), Intelligence (14), Agility (24), Dexterity (31)

His stats were slightly different from when he first received the Spying skill.

First of all, his stamina had decreased by one, while his agility had gone up by two, and his intelligence by 10. His rise in intelligence was due to constantly studying with An Eun-young.

By the way, it was strange that his stamina had decreased, while his agility had increased.

Why had such a thing occurred?

Tae-hyuk coughed.

‘Hum hum. I am an energetic high school student. It can’t be helped!’

Anyway, it had been a week since his suspension, and he had already studied and raised his intelligence by 10 points. This increase rate wouldn’t have been possible without An Eun-young’s studying skill. If he kept doing it at this rate, then he would be able to raise it to 50 points during his suspension period.

“Tae-hyuk, are you okay?”

An Eun-young came in holding a bag of ice.

At this moment, Tae-hyuk felt dizzy. Come to think of it, he was currently alone in a room with a girl. Of course, this wasn't his purpose, as he was here to study with An Eun-young. Still, he couldn't help being nervous.

“Just how much did you study? You suddenly got a nosebleed.”

Tae-hyuk pulled out the tissue blocking his nose and said.

“No, I don't think I got the nosebleed from that. The meal...”

Tae-hyuk recalled the dinner that An Eun-young had prepared.

Turtle soup, grilled eel, fried pork liver, bokbunja juice. They were energetic and were really good. Eating such things had caused his blood to overflow.

An Eun-young's expression darkened.

“Um... Do you not like the taste?”

“That isn't it. I-It is just a little much.’

“Stamina is important for studying! I made these dishes because they are good for your stamina...”

“Ah, no! It is delicious!”



“R-really? I’m glad! How is your stamina? Isn’t it going up?”

It didn’t seem to have a good effect on his stamina.

Tae-hyuk couldn’t tell the truth to An Eun-young who was smiling so innocently.

The ice pack was placed on his head to cool down his hot body.

An Eun-young declared with a smile.

“Then, let’s start learning!”

An Eun-young had taken off her uniform and was only wearing a thin dress. Now that the test had ended, her dark circles were almost gone. The hidden innocent and cute appearance of hers was revealed.

Tae-hyuk swallowed his saliva.

‘H-help me.’

---

An Eun-young’s private lesson ended at 10 p.m. Tae-hyuk exerted great patience and studied well until the end.

‘Well, since I am getting help from her studying skill...’

His other stats weren't rising this quickly. Intelligence had increased by 10 and his score on the mock test rose by nearly 20 points. He really might be able to reach the high rankings in the whole school in just a month.

‘By the way, I never thought that Park Sung-kwang would actually drop out.’

Today was the day that Park Sung-kwang's disciplinary committee would be held. Obviously, the result would be similar to Tae-hyuk's.

However, Park Sung-kwang hadn't come to school since a week ago, and today he had suddenly dropped out.

‘Well. He did trust in his father too much.’

Park Seong-ho and his secretary, Lee Ki-hwan, were both criminals on the blacklist. It was lucky that he could secure two people at once.

However, there was a bitter taste in his mouth.

Lee Ki-hwan was different from other criminals, as he only followed the orders of Park Seong-ho. However, the end result was

still a crime. In the end, he acted according to his conscience. Despite the handcuffs, his face looked satisfied, because he no longer needed to get his hands dirty.

Originally, it would have taken a few more years for Lee Ki-hwan to do this. His hands would have become even dirtier.

Tae-hyuk was able to finish matters before all of that even happened.

The series of events started with cheating, and ended with a politician and his secretary being arrested.

Tae-hyuk had watched the TV as Park Seong-ho and Lee Ki-hwan were handcuffed. He then received two affinity points. He thought back to Yoo Cheol-ho, and recalled the two people killed by Lee Ki-hwan that were saved.

‘Currently I only caught three people? What about the hippo and the clown?’

They were people on the blacklist that he would meet soon. This wasn’t a game, and the criminals didn’t appear in order from weakest to strongest.

‘There is a chance I might meet the final boss at the beginning.’

There would be no way for him to deal with them with his current abilities.

His head hurt. If he had a colleague who he could share everything with...

‘Should I tell Kang-suk hyung?’

Tae-hyuk shook his head. Kang-suk had to be the guardian of Haran and Tae-min, so Tae-hyuk couldn’t drag them into the middle of an incident.

‘Is there anyone on the blacklist that I can cooperate with?’

No apparent name came to mind.

His mind was filled with complicated thoughts. Tae-hyuk became lost in his thoughts as he walked the streets at night.

There were luxury homes around him. An Eun-young’s house was one of them. Her father was the director of a general hospital. She was good at studying and lived well. Her face was also cute when it wasn’t covered in dark circles. Another bonus was that she cooked well.

‘I don’t know who she will marry, but they must’ve saved a country in their past life.’

Tae-hyuk licked his lips.

At the end of the street, there was a two-storey house that seemed like it would appear in a drama.

‘One day, I will move into a house like that.’

A smile formed on Tae-hyuk’s face as he imagined his family living together in a two-storey house with a yard.

But then he saw something strange.

‘Are they trying to climb over the wall because they lost their house key?’

Tae-hyuk decided to quietly watch the situation.

It was a woman who looked suspicious. She was wearing leather clothes that clung to her body and had various tools.

There was something else that stood out, however. She couldn’t climb the fence and kept slipping down. Every time it happened, she would kick the stones on the street. She seemed strangely familiar.

‘Uh, isn’t that the person from last time?’

An Eun-young had lost her spirit after being threatened. He had seen the woman when he took An Eun-young home, and didn’t think it was a big deal at the time.

When he thought about it again, he felt suspicious. He didn't think she would lose her key twice. There seemed to be a different purpose.

‘... A thief?

Why else would she be standing in front of a rich home?

In the end, the novice thief turned her head to look for another way.

Tae-hyuk shook his head

It felt like watching a toddler trying to climb a wall so he walked away. He wanted to get far away.

---

“What’s going on?”

It was past 10 o’clock at night.

Tae-hyuk was surprised when he arrived home. The house was in a mess, as if a thief had gone through it. The closet and drawers were pulled open and all the contents emptied.

Tae-min was attending a private cram school and wasn't back

yet. Ha-ran was sitting on the floor and crying alone.

“T-Tae-hyuk... W-waaaah!”

Tae-hyuk bit his lip.

It felt like meeting the thief on his way home had foreshadowed the current situation.

First, he had to make sure that Ha-ran wasn't hurt.

“Noona. Are you okay?”

“U, eung...”

Ha-ran stammered as she explained the situation.

She had went out for a while and came back to this. The house was a mess.

Tae-hyuk inwardly sighed with relief. The most important thing was that Ha-ran hadn't been at home.

“Then what did they steal?”

Tae-hyuk's house didn't have any valuables. The money they had was used to pay back all the debts. It covered everything. The rest

went into the furniture.

Most of this was due to the bounty received for catching Yoo Cheol-ho. However, there was less profit to be gained compared to the effort to move the furniture.

“First of all, we still have all the furniture but...”

All of the furniture was still here.

Then Ha-ran pointed to her treasure chest with a trembling hand.

‘Surely not my bankbook? Even if they steal it, they won’t be able to withdraw anything.’

After the voice phishing incident, Tae-hyuk had set a password on his account and all the seals were kept separately. Three family members were in charge of them. They couldn’t do anything with just one seal.

“M-Mother’s keepsake is gone.”

Tae-hyuk trembled as he heard Ha-ran’s words.

It was the silver Rosario. It wasn’t a cheap item. It was worth approximately 200,000 won? It was an ornament that was difficult to determine the value because it was worn.



However, it was the only remaining memento of his parents. No matter how difficult life was, they couldn't sell it.

But alas, it was now stolen. No matter how much it was worth, it was a precious memory that they couldn't live without.

Tae-hyuk's hands trembled.

Perhaps the culprit wasn't listed on his blacklist. However, they had stolen something precious in Tae-hyuk's family.

Tae-hyuk gritted his teeth.

He burned with fighting spirit as he thought of the thief.

"Noona. Don't worry, I'll surely find Rosario."

"Kuheom. Sniffle!"

Tae-hyuk grabbed some tissues for the crying Ha-ran. Ha-ran sniffled and blew her nose.

From what Tae-hyuk remembered, Rosario had been safe for the entirety of those 15 years. However, it was now stolen.

The cause was Tae-hyuk moving to this house.

It was like a butterfly effect, since a thief wouldn't bother with a semi-basement rented room.

Tae-hyuk felt a heavy sense of responsibility.

Changing the present changed the future. But it wasn't always in a good way.

“Yes. Let's start catching a thief.”

## Chapter 20 - Criminals #2

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Tae-hyuk knew of a thief in the immediate vicinity.

He had just witnessed a thief trying to cross a wall as he returned from Eun-young's house. He wasn't a hero or police officer. If there was no benefit then there was no reason to catch other criminals.

But now it was different, as it was likely that she had robbed his house. She had visibly looked very clumsy; however, the thief who stole Rosario didn't seem that good either. He needed to confirm if they were the same person.

Tae-hyuk ran to the high-class residential area where there were always thieves.

‘... There!’

The scene wasn't much different than it was 30 minutes ago.

He hid his body in the darkness and watched. If she had Rosario, then he could steal it using Robbery.

‘She still hasn't climbed the fence.’

She was worried about how to enter the yard. But what if it was just a performance...?

It was at that moment.

Something different happened than usual.

The thief huffed angrily and kicked the wall with her feet. Of course, this caused tremendous pain, so she grabbed her toes and started rolling on the ground.

Then Tae-hyuk's eyes widened. For the first time, Tae-hyuk was able to see the face of the female thief.

He almost screamed at that moment.

‘T-that woman!’

The thief was a person that Tae-hyuk knew.

She had long black hair that flowed down to her waist, and a butterfly mask on her face. Was it to hide her identity? However, half of the face was clearly revealed.

‘It is Moonlight Flower!’

She was in her early 20s. That was 10 years younger than what Tae-hyuk remembered.

Of course, the other person was also astonished to see him.

“Kyaaak! T-thief!”

Moonlight Flower shrieked.

“... You shouldn’t be the one saying that. Who is the thief?”

Tae-hyuk angrily replied to Moonlight Flower’s words.

“I’m not a thief. You must be mistaken.”

“That argument is hardly convincing when wearing such clothes... You completely look like a thief.”

Moonlight Flower looked down at her body. She was dressed in tight clothing that showed off her body. Many of her body parts were highlighted.

Moonlight Flower shrieked again.

“Kyaaak! Where are you looking?”

“.....”

Moonlight Flower covered her chest with both arms. It was to cover something exceptionally large. Still, the size meant that it

couldn't be completely hidden.

Tae-hyuk made a wry smile.

‘I never expected to meet Moonlight Flower here, of all places.’

She was a capable thief who started her activities approximately four years from now. She primarily aimed at banks, large corporations, and also conglomerates. Rather than stealing money or objects, she was famous for leaving marks of her visit. She would enter a vault filled with gold bars, taking nothing and leaving after leaving a sign, showing that she was there. For example, she would break into a museum and vandalize a painting. She only aimed for the richest, and also had a cute appearance. The youthful personality meant that she would become popular and have a large fan club.

‘Four years later. Did she work before her name was known?’

Tae-hyuk gritted his teeth.

It was unlikely that Moonlight Flower had robbed his house. However, he needed to check to confirm it. She had kicked a wall, so it seemed like she couldn't move properly.

Tae-hyuk moved quickly and narrowed the distance to Moonlight Flower.

Moonlight Flower, who had fallen to the ground, instantly got up

and started to run away. A thief with sore feet...

Tae-hyuk ran to catch the opponent.

Then he was shocked.

One of Moonlight Flower's feet was obviously hurting, yet she was running at such a quick speed. The distance between the two people gradually started to widen.

‘W-what is this speed?’

The movements were unexpected from someone who couldn't even climb a wall.

Tae-hyuk exclaimed.

“Wait a minute! I have no intention of catching you. I just want to ask you something!”

Moonlight Flower laughed.

“Heheng! Do you think I will be convinced by that?”

The distance widened from five metres to twenty metres in an instant.

He was going to end up missing her.

Biiiiik!

It was at that moment. There was the sound of a whistle.

There were police patrolling nearby. Two senior policemen and one junior policeman approached Tae-hyuk.

“What is going on?”

Tae-hyuk panted as he pointed in front of him.

“T-thief.”

He was able to see the back of Moonlight Flower, who was currently running away. The policeman nodded like he already knew.

“I have a perfect grasp of these streets. We will go chase them. Students, please take this path.”

“I understand.”

A group of three people ran through the streets in order to catch Moonlight Flower.



Tae-hyuk chased after Moonlight Flower, while the policemen were circling around to build a net. They had a very good knowledge of this area.

‘She will be caught soon.’

Moonlight Flower had great physical abilities, so Tae-hyuk would never be able to catch her alone.

However, it was four against one. In addition, one of the policemen had perfectly grasped the geography.

‘Wait. Should I let Moonlight Flower get caught?’

It was important that Tae-hyuk recover Roasario. Even if Moonlight Flower wasn't the criminal, he shouldn't let her get caught.

Tae-hyuk smirked. He suddenly came up with a good idea.

He ignored the policemen and entered a side street. He climbed up to the roof of a house and confirmed the location of Moonlight Flower and the policemen.

‘Isn't she clearly being surrounded?’

He was able to read the plan from this height. Tae-hyuk discovered the final destination and decided to wait there.

The policemen were herding Moonlight Flower like she was a rabbit. In no time, she was in a dead end. Moonlight Flower could escape if she climbed over the wall, but she couldn't do so with an injured foot.

Then Tae-hyuk appeared.

“Grab on! Quickly!”

Tae-hyuk extended his hand to Moonlight Flower from his position on the wall.

“...?”

Moonlight Flower looked at Tae-hyuk with a confused expression.

Didn't he want to catch her?

Yet Tae-hyuk suddenly appeared and shouted like he was planning to rescue Moonlight Flower.

“Damn, just do it! They are coming!”

Tae-hyuk spoke again as Moonlight Flower kept hesitating.

“If you don’t grab my hand in three seconds then I am running away alone.”

“O-Okay.”

Moonlight Flower grabbed the hand of the angry Tae-hyuk and climbed the wall.

Then both of them ran away with all their strength.

---

Tae-hyuk arrived at a safe place and calmed his breathing.

Whether it was because they wanted the reward for catching the thief or a holiday, the policemen were really persistent. They had ran for over an hour and barely managed to escape.

“Pant...! Keok...! Really great stamina... How are you fine after running...?”

“Ahaha. I have confidence in my stamina.”

However, she couldn’t do something as basic as climb a wall. A strange thief. After confirming that they were safe, Moonlight Flower made an odd expression. Then she asked.

“Why did you save me?”

“... I wasn’t trying to catch you. Is this answer enough? Besides, I’m also a thief.”

“Then why were you chasing me?”

“Didn’t you try to rob my house a few hours ago? This is my area. It is a violation of the rules to invade my area. I was trying to tell you this.”

The movements of Moonlight Flower stopped completely.

Tae-hyuk inwardly smiled with satisfaction.

He had met a lot of thieves in prison, and learned that they had their own laws.

Was it because he saved her from being caught? Moonlight Flower’s expression softened.

“... Eung. I didn’t go anywhere today.”

Tae-hyuk had completely caught her.

“Someone aimed for my house and I was robbed today. It really wasn’t you?”

Moonlight Flower responded “Yes.” in a small voice.

She was surprisingly naive. It was a good type to be scammed.

The control of the conversation was completely in Tae-hyuk’s hands. She was physically better than Tae-hyuk, but he had 10 years of experience.

“Are you telling me the truth? You might have hidden the stolen item somewhere on your body.”

Tae-hyuk said with a smile. It was a speech that would touch the person’s hidden intentions.

“T-Then check it!”

Moonlight Flower huffed angrily.

Tae-hyuk swallowed his saliva. He hadn’t expected that it would come to this. She was wearing leather clothes that exposed her body. There was not much space to hide anything.

“Why, just do it!”

Moonlight Flower came up to Tae-hyuk, grabbed his hand, and placed it on her chest. It felt like he was touching a soft marshmallow.

Tae-hyuk's face reddened.

“Nothing? Is this still lacking? Do you want to check anywhere else?”

Tae-hyuk blushed and coughed.

“C-Cough. There doesn't seem to be anything.”

His tone had changed to speaking in honorifics.

“In addition, I think that you are mistaken about something. Come along with me for a moment.”

Moonlight Flower grabbed Tae-hyuk's hand and pulled him back to the original location. It was the place where she tried to cross the wall.

“I know that you think I was trying to rob this house... Oh, don't get me wrong! It is just my hobby! This is actually my house!”

She emphasized it again.

“My house!”

“Ah, yes.”

Moonlight Flower even took a key out from her pocket and opened the gate.

“Look. Right?”

So she was trying to climb the wall of her own house.

‘Indeed, Moonlight Flower... I really can’t understand her. Really...’

“By the way, are you really a thief? It is suspicious. Aren’t you going to show me proof?”

Moonlight Flower’s eyes narrowed with doubt.

Tae-hyuk quickly pulled out the Demon Revealing Mirror from his pocket and prepared a skill.

Then he said.

“Well. Let me show you the evidence. “

Tae-hyuk started slowly walking and bumped Moonlight Flower in the shoulder.

[Robbery has been used.]

-Please select the item you want to steal!

‘Now, let’s steal something suitable.’

Tae-hyuk looked at the Demon Revealing Mirror to see what would come up.

All of a sudden, Moonlight Flower rushed towards Tae-hyuk.

“Wah! What is that thing? Cute!”

It was a mirror with a demon engraved on it. It was the first time he had seen a reaction like this.

Tae-hyuk chose randomly from the list due to Moonlight Flower.

‘W-what! What did I steal this time?’

The confused Tae-hyuk searched through his pocket, and touched a piece of soft cloth.

‘D-Don’t tell me...?’

Fortunately, it was the butterfly mask on her face.



Tae-hyuk pulled it out and waved it.

“Uh, when did you steal this?”

Moonlight Flower ran to Tae-hyung, grabbed the mask, and put it on her face again.

“D-Did you see?”

“I didn’t see anything.”

“You saw! My face!”

Tae-hyuk was at a loss for words. In the first place, the butterfly mask was already half falling off. Did she think it would hide her identity?

“Anyway, do you believe that I’m a thief now?”

Moonlight Flower placed her hands on her waist and turned her head to the side.

“Bah. Your skills still have a long way to go.”

The one speaking was someone who couldn’t even climb the wall of her own house.

Tae-hyuk just extended his hand.

“Either way, this is a relationship. How about exchanging information among business partners?”

Thieves had their own network. It ranged from places to dispose of stolen goods to equipment deals. Even if it was still early, Moonlight Flower was a thief. It was likely that she knew more information than Tae-hyuk.

This was what Tae-hyuk was aiming for.

“Yes...”

Moonlight Flower moaned pathetically.

Tae-hyuk decided to help her make a decision.

“In exchange for becoming business partners... I’ll take what I just saw to the grave.”

“... You did see! Bah! It can’t be helped. Should I give you my cell phone number?”

Tae-hyuk nodded.

Moonlight Flower said in a strange voice.

“Wah. You got a phone number through this outrageous method.”

Tae-hyuk made a dumbfounded expression and held out his cell phone.

Then Moonlight Flower approached Tae-hyuk.

He could feel something soft leaning against his arm. Tae-hyuk coughed. He couldn't control the blood in his body due to the good food that An Eun-young made.

His face turned red as he felt Moonlight Flower's soft body.

“An old fashioned phone... By the way, why are you blushing? How old are you?”

“It is my 2nd year of high school.”

“The cell phone seems to be the same age. At any rate, I am your Noona! Cutie, what is your name?”

“Seo Tae-hyuk.”

“Noona is called Moonlight Flower. A pseudonym.”

Moonlight Flower then left her contact details in Tae-hyuk's phone.

‘Hrmm. Her real name is Yoo Ha-yang.’

Moonlight Flower had registered her number with her real name, not her pseudonym. He was starting to doubt whether she really wanted to hide her identity.

Tae-hyuk sent a short text to the number entered by Moonlight Flower. It was to exchange contact details.

‘Anyway, I believe that Moonlight Flower is a thief. I can take advantage of this.’

“Then, Tae-hyuk! Be careful when walking the streets at night!”

“Yes. Moonlight Flower noona should be careful not to get hurt when falling from the wall. Be careful.”

“I didn't fall!”

Tae-hyuk said goodbye and started walking home.

To Moonlight Flower, stealing was a ‘hobby.’ It didn't matter if she was just a clumsy novice now, as her growth potential was tremendous.

‘She has really good physical capabilities... I can use this.’

Tae-hyuk smirked.

Above all, her chest was big.

## Chapter 21 - Criminals #3

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Moonlight Flower wasn't the culprit. Tae-hyuk had checked her belongings using the Robbery skill, and Rosario wasn't among them.

If so, who was the thief who robbed his house?

Tae-hyuk first thought about how to find the real thief. First of all, it was hard right now, as they might be looking for other prey or hiding in their shelter.

Night was the time of the thief. It was difficult to specify the position of his free moving target.

‘My opponent is a thief who targets this area.’

Thieves were extremely territorial. So most of the time, they would continue to work in their ‘designated territory.’ It was the reason why thieves were often caught in the same area. Some time had passed since the crime was committed, and it was impossible to find the thief's whereabouts right now.

Tae-hyuk utilized all of his knowledge.

‘There is a place where a thief who commits a crime must go. I need to go there.’

A thief had to dispose of the items they had stolen and change it into money. The so-called person who ‘received stolen goods.’

Most of them would buy the goods at a reasonable price. In some cases, they would hire a thief directly if there was something they absolutely needed. They wouldn’t directly dirty their hands and would receive huge benefits.

“Hrmm...”

Tae-hyuk groaned.

There was a small problem.

‘I have never been to one...’

A broker of stolen goods had their own nest.

Tae-hyuk remembered there was a broker who managed a thief near Cheonggyecheon. But he had only heard about it through a thief at the prison. He didn’t know who the stolen goods broker was.

Of course, what they did was illegal. It wasn’t like a chicken house that would be advertised on flyers.

If he knew this, then he would’ve listened more carefully...

Tae-hyuk shook his head.

‘If I had known, then I would’ve memorized the lottery numbers. First of all, I have to make the most of what I know.’

Tae-hyuk decided to meet up with the broker.

He had the crime skills, and he could take advantage of it. Then he would be able to get what he wanted.

---

The sun was rising as Tae-hyuk stretched out. He got up and went through some light stretches.

On his desk was a reference book recommended by An Eun-young.

After school ended, he would learn directly from her. Other than that, he needed to study by himself.

‘My stats didn’t go up today...’

If the study skill wasn’t present, then it took him almost 10 times longer for his stats to rise.

In order for Tae-hyuk to be on a similar level to An Eun-young, he needed to raise his school rank by almost 200. It needed to be



done within a month. It would've been impossible if he didn't have the help of the studying skill.

‘I would love to spend all day with Eun-young but...’

She had her own life. He couldn't do that.

In the end, he had to study alone while An Eun-young was at school.

‘Why am I desperately trying to become 1st in the school...’

He couldn't complain to anyone.

The Demon Revealing Mirror showed that he had dark circles under his eyes.

There was only one person who would come and see it.

“It is An Eun-young.”

He couldn't help but sigh.

“Anyway, it is time for the stolen goods broker to do business.”

Thieves worked at night, and would check their equipment as they disposed of stolen items during the day.

Naturally, this was the broker's main activity time.

Tae-hyuk searched through his vague memories as he headed to Cheonggyecheon.

---

“Is it this place?”

Tae-hyuk hid in a back alley and looked at a building.

On the surface, it was a pawn shop that didn't seem that suspicious.

The problem was the people.

‘Everybody has a tired face, as if they couldn't sleep at night. Uh, that person just yawned.’

In addition, the person exited after five minutes and was carrying a thick bundle of money. There was no sense of urgency when they entered the pawn shop.

‘This is the correct answer. They're all thieves!’

10 people entered in just one hour.

Tae-hyuk clicked his tongue.

‘There are so many thieves in the country.’

This was why no matter how many taxes was paid, there was always a deficiency.

There was nothing good about facing other thieves. Tae-hyuk waited for all the customers of the pawn shop to leave.

‘Now!’

“Uh, is it Tae-hyuk?”

A sleepy voice was heard from behind him.

Moonlight Flower was standing there while yawning.

“... Moonlight Flower noona?”

“Hello!”

Unlike yesterday, Moonlight Flower was wearing normal clothes.

However she was wearing dark sunglasses to hide her identity.

She wasn't able to concede one thing.

‘Jeans and a top that shows her belly... It is better than the leather clothes she wore yesterday...’

Even so, the exposure was too high. He didn't know where to look.

Moonlight Flower approached and plastered herself onto Tae-hyuk's side.

Then she spoke in a chirpy voice.

“Did you come to get supplies from Mama?”

Tae-hyuk's eyes shone.

‘The broker is called Mama?’

“Mama? Yes, I wanted to buy something.”

“Huh ~ Is that so?”

It seemed like he could take advantage of meeting Moonlight Flower here.

Tae-hyuk asked with a sly expression.

“Did that house from yesterday not belong to Noona? No, you couldn’t even cross the wall properly. Why are you going to a broker of stolen goods...?”

Moonlight Flower’s face turned red. She waved her hands and exclaimed.

“Now, I’m not trying to dispose of stolen goods! Yesterday, I accidentally broke a stick. I’m trying to get a new one...”

“You should be careful.”

Tae-hyuk nodded with a convinced look.

Thieves would also buy things from brokers, as the brokers also sold equipment. Moonlight Flower had a variety of tools. She wouldn’t have bought them from an auction, so most of them would be purchased here.

“I came to buy equipment. What did Tae-hyuk come to buy?”

“That’s not it. I need information.”

“Hrmm. Obviously, there is something that you are looking for. That other thief must have stolen it. Then, did you come to the broker to ask if somebody had come to the store to sell it?”

Tae-hyuk's eyes widened.

He thought that she was just a stupid thief. However, she was smarter than he thought.

Moonlight Flower smiled at the expression on Tae-hyuk's face and poked his cheek.

"Ahah, is that the answer? You shouldn't make fun of a woman's senses."

"..... Please keep it a secret from Mama. Wouldn't it be nice to share each other's secrets?"

He needed to ensure that Moonlight Flower didn't reveal it.

Moonlight Flower folded her arms and said.

"Well, I'll won't reveal it."

"But isn't Noona curious about the thief who ignored the rules and invaded someone else's territory?"

"Yes. I am curious."

"Then do you want to go with me? Don't you have something to do here anyway?"

Moonlight Flower's eyes widened.

"I-Is that so? I also didn't want to go alone."

"Then I will be the one talking. Just watch from the sidelines."

"Let's go!"

Moonlight Flower seemed to be familiar with the stolen goods broker. If he entered with her, then the broker's wariness would reduce. He would be able to obtain what he wanted earlier.

'Shall I get some information about Mama from Moonlight Flower?'

Tae-hyuk asked casually.

"You seem to come here often."

Mama's store was on a corner of an alley in Cheonggyecheon. It looked like any other ordinary pawn shop. A place that lend money for goods received.

"It is the most famous place for handling stolen jewellery in the area."

The important thing was for the broker to evaluate the goods and calculate the correct price.

Among the items that the thieves handled, there were many fakes. It was up to the broker to judge the stolen goods.

Moonlight Flower started talking about things that Tae-hyuk didn't even ask. She was a person who would be called an enemy to herself.

Tae-hyuk stored the things Moonlight Flower told him in his head. Information was always valuable.

“Then let's go.”

Tae-hyuk and Moonlight Flower opened the door and entered the pawn shop.

A woman who was painting stood up and welcomed them.

“Welcome. How can I help you?”

The woman seemed to be in her early 30s. She was dressed in black mourning clothes. A beautiful woman who gave off a mature atmosphere.

“Hey, Ajumma! I came here to ask you something. Well, not exactly me but this guy.”



“Omo. It is Moonlight. Come on. Didn’t I tell you to call me unni, instead of ajumma?”

“I understand! Mama unni!”

“I will say it one more time, if you call me ajumma then I will stick a knife in your belly.”

“Ahaha... I’m sorry.”

Mama laughed, but she had a strange expression on her face.

“Is he your boyfriend? Well, you are pretty. Why are you just standing there?”

“Nope. He is just a younger brother that I know. He is a little naive.”

“Really? Anyway, I’ll go and get some cold drinks. Wait here.”

Moonlight Flower talked in a familiar manner to Mama.

Tae-hyuk was just watching with an open mouth.

‘I should have noticed when I heard the name Mama. I didn’t think that it would be Big Mama.’

Tae-hyuk felt dizzy.

Big Mama was one of the big criminal brokers.

She dealt with counterfeit art that went into the range of tens of billions of won. She was a representative of South Korea, just like the Russian or American mafias.

He had entered the lair of a tiger.

‘I-I have to get out of here!’

Then Mama spoke.

“Omo, Moonlight. Your brother is trying to run away? However, I hope he knows that this place is free to enter, but not free to leave.”

Tae-hyuk wanted to cry.

## Chapter 22 - Criminals #4

---

Unlike the bloody atmosphere it was conducted in, the talk proceeded rather smoothly.

Besides, Moonlight Flower was a surprisingly good help.

‘Joking around with Big Mama...’

The image of the Big Mama that Tae-hyuk knew was like the difference between heaven and earth.

She built up her skills while working as a stolen goods broker, before entering the counterfeit art industry. It seemed like now was that time.

‘Still, her ability to make counterfeit goods is already huge.’

Big Mama was painting a copy of something. In Tae-hyuk’s eyes, it was hard to distinguish between the original and the fake.

Tae-hyuk’s eyes lit up.

Moonlight Flower had disappeared into the warehouse in order to find a stick to use.

This was his chance.

Tae-hyuk organized the information he had about Big Mama in his head. The details had been written down in his blacklist, but he was still able to come up with some important points on the spot.

He remembered something very unusual.

“So, Kid. What did you need?”

Big Mama asked with the smile of a salesperson.

“Hello, I am Seo Tae-hyuk. There are many rumors about Mama. It is an honor to meet you. Then, I’ll speak bluntly. I want to make a deal with Mama.”

Big Mama made a surprised expression while her eyes sharpened.

“Hoh. You aren’t an ordinary kid.”

“Aren’t you always saying that the appearance on the outside isn’t important?”

“... You know me very well.”

“You are famous.”

“What type of deal do you want to establish?”

She wanted to know what he wanted. Tae-hyuk had no intention of showing all the cards in his hand.

“Do you happen to know the thief who stole an item called the Rosario in this neighbourhood yesterday? The appearance looks roughly like this.”

Tae-hyuk showed a picture of Rosario that he drew in advance.

Big Mama replied in a relaxed tone.

“I trade in many stolen goods in one day, and I can’t remember all of it.”

“I know that Mama has such a good memory that Mama can even remember a piece of merchandise from a week ago.”

Big Mama was famous for her tremendous memory.

“Hoh. Not many people know about my specialty... You are a kid that I really can’t look down on. No, shall I call you Tae-hyuk?”

The title coming from Big Mama’s mouth changed.

Tae-hyuk knew what that meant.

“I would like to deal in information. If you give me information about the thief who took Rosario, then I will give you one piece of information.”

“I will listen first and decide.”

Tae-hyuk spoke casually, as if he was ordering jajangmyeon from a Chinese restaurant.

“The Trail of the Sunset.”

It felt like time had stopped.

Big Mama froze.

“... How do you...?”

There were two implications.

Tae-hyuk smiled gently.

He said it because he knew the future of Big Mama.

“It is a piece that all art collectors desire.”

Big Mama’s hand trembled in response. It was an expression like she had been hit.

“It is very important that the information is reliable. There is no guarantee that you won’t lie.”

Tae-hyuk knew that Big Mama would say this. The answer was also prepared.

“Aren’t you in a position to look through straws right now? If my information is unbelievable, then it can’t be helped. I will give up on the deal.”

Tae-hyuk said boldly. If the box wasn’t opened, then the person wouldn’t know if they had received what they ordered from the Chinese restaurant. Of course, it was the same for the other person.

This was the risk with trading information.

“Tae-hyuk is telling me to betray the money making game. Do you know that?”

“The Trail of the Sunset, or money. Select one of the two.”

There was no need to even weigh it. No matter how many ping pong balls were stacked up, they still wouldn’t be able to beat a bowling ball.

Big Mama was still smiling, but her eyes were burning with a

strange fire.

“If you are lying then be ready, for I will give you a very painful punishment.”

“Then, I’ll tell you the location of the painting. Mama, please tell me the name and phone number of the person I am looking for.”

Big Mama said to him.

“I don’t gamble, but I will try to believe Tae-hyuk just once. The thief...”

Tae-hyuk was able to get the information he desired by trading with Big Mama.

---

“What are you going to do now?”

“I have to make a trap that he can’t run from, so I will have to prepare something to tempt him.”

“Ahum~”

Moonlight Flower spoke in a strange tone and laughed.



Tae-hyuk spoke in an apologetic voice.

“I’m sorry, but I’ll have to leave you here.”

“Bah. You ate everything, and now you want to discard me like a used tissue?”

“I’m sorry. Instead, I promise to talk after catching K.”

K was the initial of the criminal.

“You promise?”

“Yes.”

Moonlight Flower extended a finger.

“I will add one more thing. Go to the aquarium with me on the weekend sometime. There is something that I want to discuss with you there.”

“...Well. Ok, I understand.”

This time, Tae-hyuk owed a big favor to Moonlight Flower, so he decided to listen to her request.

Moonlight Flower continued waving until Tae-hyuk disappeared

from her sight.

‘I never thought I would meet two blacklist members in one day.’

Tae-hyuk inwardly sighed.

Moonlight Flower and Big Mama. It seemed like they were attracting each other. There were 120 people on the blacklist. It was impossible to think that he could go against all of them, even with his crime skills.

‘First of all, I have to watch the situation...’

While Tae-hyuk didn’t know much about Moonlight Flower, he knew that Big Mama was as sly like a fox.

Was it possible for him to leave her alone?

Tae-hyuk’s mind became complicated.

‘Let’s just think about catching K for now.’

Tae-hyuk dialled the number given by Big Mama.

The plan for catching K was already in place.

There were a few beeps.

“Hello?”

The call was connected.

---

Kim Sang-hyun didn't feel good in the morning.

He didn't know how many days it had been since he had found something good.

Yesterday, he went to collect from a newly discovered prey. There was a family who recently moved into his area. Usually, in such cases, there were large amounts of money in the owner's house.

However, they were already diligent and entrusted it all to the bank, so he had to resort to taking various miscellaneous things around the house. There wasn't even a single gold ring.

Kim Sang-hyun spat on the floor.

“Che! Ara, you bastards.”

He wanted to move on to another area, but the situation wasn't right. Maybe there was already someone else...

He pulled out a cigarette and put it in his mouth. He had just bought a new pack, but it was already the last one.

“Crazy. I have no cigarettes left.”

It was dangerous if he couldn't hit the jackpot.

He was enjoying his cigarette when the phone rang.

He didn't know the number. Perhaps it was a spam call.

Kim Sang-hyun suddenly came up with a good idea. He would swear at the people on the phone to relieve stress.

Sang-hyun pressed the call button and brought the phone to his ear.

“.....”

He first had to check who the person was. If it was someone he didn't know, then he would curse at them.

Sang-hyun concentrated on the other person's voice.

-Sang-hyun, it is Mother.

Kim Sang-hyun couldn't believe his ears. Mama was calling him

directly.

“Ah, Mother. What’s wrong?”

-Well, I am calling because I thought I should bring something to your attention. Earlier, some kid was looking for you. I don’t know who he is, but you ought to be careful. He asked about you.

“For me? What did you do?”

-How long have we been working together? Of course, I gave him the wrong number.

“Haha... Thank you, Mother.”

He heard a soft laugh over the phone.

-Well, there is a fee for the information.”

“I see.”

She wouldn’t hand over false information for free.

Kim Sang-hyun felt sweat flowing, as Mama wasn’t just a simple stolen goods broker.

-I know what you are thinking. I’m Mama, I’m not that cold. I

got free income thanks to Sang-hyun. Sang-hyun should also receive a prize. I received some very good information, so how about it? Do you want to give it a try?

At that moment, Kim Sang-hyun wanted to cheer.

It was a great opportunity for thieves. A place that held a lot of valuables.

“I accept! No, I will do it! Please let me do it!”

-Hoho! I understand. Indeed, Sang-hyun. You are dependable.

Stolen goods brokers often handed over information.

If so, there was an implicit rule when doing business with that person.

Kim Sang-hyun barely refrained from laughing.

Mama's spot was rumored to be a jackpot.

“Then what should I steal?”

-There will be lots of diamonds. Please help Mama steal all of them.

“Haha. Just believe in me!”

Kim Sang-hyun combed through the information given by Mama.

Diamonds?

“Hahaha! I will be rich! Rich!”

---

The spot wasn't far away.

Kim Sang-hyun did a final equipment check. His equipment variety ranged from locksmith tools to levers for lifting heavy objects.

It seemed like he was going to rob a bank, not a house.

“Then... This isn't my area. Is it okay?”

He came here under the name of the greatest information broker, Mama.

Even the owner of the territory wouldn't be able to have any complaints.

The spot was a two-storey house with a spacious courtyard. In recent years, expensive security systems were often found in homes like these. It was really hard to eat and live in this world.

‘It doesn’t look like there is one common CCTV. A big jackpot!’

Kim Sang-hyun cheered.

As expected from Mama. He wondered how she found information about this spot.

It was late at night, so there was no one in the house. The fireplace was turned off, and no loud sounds could be heard.

A golden opportunity to steal!

The hum of a song came out.

Kim Sang-hyun was a thief with considerable skill. He was even able to get into a safety deposit box in five minutes because he was the child of a locksmith.

He opened a locked door using his skills.

According to Mama’s information, the diamonds were in the bedroom. He walked towards the destination while visualizing the structure of the house in his head.



‘Here!’

Kim Sang-hyun excitedly opened the door.

Pang!

Pang pang!

Suddenly, there were the sounds of firecrackers popping.

The dark room lit up.

The people hiding in the darkness cheered.

“Surprise~!”

“Congratulations!”

“Happy birthday, Chief-nim!”

“Chief-nim, I love you!”

“Milk-coloured Chief-nim!”

Kim Sang-hyun stopped moving.

Diamonds. There were a lot of diamonds. Three representative diamonds.

“Kim Sun-kyung. No matter how much we look, isn't that not the chief?”

The second diamond answered.

“Yes, that's right!”

A diamond was a diamond, but they weren't jewels. However, they were covered with diamonds.

Inside the room, dozens of people were dressed in police uniforms. In the center of the room was a large cake, as well as beer and chicken.

Surprise? Birthday? What the hell?! This was the chief of police's house?

Why did Mama send him here...?

“Aaaack!”

Kim Sang-hyun screamed.

Police!

The police!

Policeeeeeee!

Kim Sang-hyun tried to flee back the way he came.

The diamond said.

“Who is this? Kim Sang-hyun! Did you come to surrender yourself for Chief-nim’s birthday?”

Today was the police chief’s birthday.

Kim Sang-hyun had to sing a congratulatory song in handcuffs.

## Chapter 23 - Criminals #5

---

“Tae-hyuk!”

“Ah, Hyung!”

Cho Kang-suk welcomed Tae-hyuk who had arrived at the police station.

Kang-suk pulled out a cup of cocoa from the vending machine and handed it to Tae-hyuk. He then poured milk in his coffee and drank it.

“Well. I see that you arrested Kim Sang-hyun yesterday?”

“Yes. Do you know him?”

Tae-hyuk thought about what to say to Kang-suk. In the end, he explained everything except for the blacklist and crime skills.

Kang-suk glared once he heard that a thief had robbed their home.

“Is Ha-ran ssi okay?”

“Yes. She is safe.”

“That, if something like that happens next time, then you should call Hyung straight away!”

Kang-suk clouted Tae-hyuk with his knuckles. Fortunately, Robbery had failed.

“Ouch... I’m sorry.”

Kang-suk was sincerely worried about Tae-hyuk and Ha-ran.

Tae-hyuk knew that Kang-suk was currently meeting with Ha-ran every weekend. They went out to eat and watch movies. It seemed like Ha-ran didn’t hate Kang-suk. Despite the age difference, weren’t they a surprisingly good match?

Tae-hyuk decided to cheer on the two people.

“At any rate, are you sure you want to meet Kim Sang-hyun?”

“It’s okay, as there are a few things that I want to ask him.”

“Really?”

In the end, as a condition, Kang-suk accompanied Tae-hyuk to the interrogation room in order to meet Kim Sang-hyun.

Kim Sang-hyun was handcuffed and screaming loudly.

“I mean, it was an accident! Why would I even go to the chief of police’s house?”

Tae-hyuk sat on the other side of the table.

“Hello. Kim Sang-hyun?”

Kim Sang-hyun stared at Tae-hyuk who suddenly appeared and said,

“Who is this bastard?”

Tae-hyuk laughed.

“It is nice to meet you. I have one thing that I want to ask.”

“What the? Are you giving kids a tour now? Has the police department gone soft?”

Kang-suk, who was standing at the door with crossed arms, approached.

“Sang-hyun. This friend is like my younger brother. Talk to him. Also, before answering, think about how much soybean paste was in the soybean paste stew that you had yesterday.”

Kim Sang-hyun turned pale at Kang-suk's words.

“Hiik! D-Detective Cho Kang-suk! I understand!”

“You'll have it for more than a week if I like what I hear.”

“Three, no four days! I'm sick of jajangmyeon!”

Most of the interrogated suspects were provided with jajangmyeon from a nearby Chinese restaurant. Kim Sang-hyun had already eaten it for all three of his meals. The detectives didn't even bother to give him jjampong.

“Brat. That's how delicious it is.”

Thus, Tae-hyuk's interrogation began.

“Two days ago, did you steal an item called Rosario from a house in H-dong? Let me know where it is currently at.”

Kim Sang-hyun whistled.

“There was such a thing... Do I remember?”

“You obviously stole it.”

“I don't know!”

In the end, Kang-suk had to come over again.

“Sang-hyun. Do you want to eat pickled radish starting from today?”

“Hiik!”

In the end, Kim Sang-hyun confessed everything he knew.

“That, I handed it over to Mama! It was completely cheap! I haven’t even received the remainder of the money yet. Ah, damn. Surely, I didn’t get caught because of that?”

“Hey. Who is Mama? Your mother?”

Kim Sang-hyun flinched and replied.

“I-I can’t answer that, even if you ask! This is my life!”

“You bastard. I am Cho Kang-suk. Do you want to keep a secret from Hyung? Say it quickly.”

Cho Kang-suk and Kim Sang-hyun started to fight.

Tae-hyuk laughed after hearing of Rosario’s whereabouts.



“Hyung. I think I know where it is. The interrogation can stop.”

“I-Is that so? Is this really okay?”

“Yes.”

Tae-hyuk left the interrogation room.

He leaned against the wall of the corridor and muttered.

“... That sly snake!”

Big Mama had Rosario.

Tae-hyuk couldn't even laugh at the sheer absurdity of the current situation.

He was like Son Wukong playing into the hands of Buddha.

“... I asked for info on the thief who stole Rosario, so she technically didn't lie to me. Hah. What should I do now?”

He thought about leaving it alone.

However, Tae-hyuk wasn't the type to avoid a fight.

He came up with a very good idea to get revenge on Big Mama.

“Ohuhu... you took Rosario, and in return, I will take away your most precious thing.”

Tae-hyuk smiled slyly.

---

Big Mama welcomed him as he entered the pawn shop.

“Welcome. Omo, is it Seo Tae-hyuk? Did you come to leave something with me?”

Big Mama was still wearing black mourning clothes. Her long hair was neatly tied back. It was a style that exposed her white neck.

‘That good looking smile is a trap. A nine-tailed fox!’

Tae-hyuk looked around Big Mama’s store.

It was seemed like a common pawn shop; but in reality, it was a stomping ground for thieves.

Tae-hyuk had gone home to get his blacklist before coming here. He read the words he wrote down about Big Mama.

‘Is she still not big?’

He knew what she was interested in. He knew her purpose for staying here as a stolen goods broker, and stored those things in his head. Based on that information, he would be able to get what he wanted.

Tae-hyuk licked his lips.

“Nope. Actually, Mama is so pretty. Do you have time to go for a cup of coffee with me?”

“Omo! This child. Don’t play around with Mama!”

Big Mama covered her mouth with a hand and laughed.

Then, the smile disappeared from her face.

“However, Seo Tae-hyuk. Didn’t you ask about Sang-hyun? Yesterday, he was caught trying to rob the police chief’s house.”

“I see.”

“You truly had no idea?”

Big Mama stared into Tae-hyuk’s eyes.

Her eyes were eerily piercing, like she was reading his mind.

“Not at all.”

“I see. Then, sit down on the chair over there. I will prepare a cup of tea.”

Tae-hyuk felt sweat flowing down his back. They had only exchanged a few words, yet Big Mama had already discerned that Kim Sang-hyun was caught by Tae-hyuk.

After a few moments. Big Mama made a cup of green tea. It wasn't from a teabag, but was freshly brewed.

Big Mama said with a smile.

“The information you told me was a lie. Moreover, you even thought about coming back here. You have more guts than I thought.”

“Mama isn't much different, right?”

“I'm not a liar like Tae-hyuk.”

The two people laughed, but the atmosphere was heavy with blood.

“I didn’t lie.”

“Ahaha!”

Tae-hyuk took a sip of the tea and said.

“Hrmm. Mama, what do you think about art?”

Big Mama made a sound at the unexpected question.

“Hoh~ why are you asking such a thing?”

“In fact, I’m very interested in art. The artworks hanging in your store are quite famous.”

Big Mama’s eyes shone.

“I didn’t expect that Tae-hyuk would be interested in art.”

“However, aren’t they all forgeries?”

“No, they are genuine.”

Tae-hyuk swallowed his saliva. This was the most important moment.

“That’s right. If you think of artwork as genuine, then they are genuine. If you believe that they are fake, then they are fake.”

“Hoh...”

Big Mama made an amazed sound. She never thought there would be someone who thought like her.

Tae-hyuk was delighted.

‘It is natural. This is the motto of the Big Mama family.’

Big Mama looked at Tae-hyuk without saying anything.

‘She is searching for my reason for coming here. I shouldn’t give it to her straight away, however.’

Tae-hyuk leisurely drank the green tea that Big Mama made him. The expensive tea leaves created a completely different scent.

A long time passed.

Tae-hyuk spoke in a tone that was neither too fast nor too slow.

“Big Mama, yesterday was the ‘Cyan Girl’ right?”

“Omomo! How did you know?”

The Cyan Girl was one of the hidden oil paintings by the baroque master Saint Germain. It was unknown to the public, but was traded among collectors for a fairly high price.

Tae-hyuk didn't answer Mama's question. He just continued his story.

"I really think that it is a tragedy for one person to monopolize such a wonderful piece of work. Mama, don't you think so?"

"....."

Tae-hyuk pulled out a picture and handed it to Big Mama. It was an image of the Trail of the Sunset that she had been looking for.

The mask disappeared from Big Mama's face as her hidden feelings were revealed.

She was shocked.

"Beautiful. Someone with a terminal illness saw this painting, and their mind could rest at ease, despite the fact that their illness wouldn't get better. They looked at this painting until their last moments. At least, that is just what I heard. This painting was then stolen by a thief, and became a legendary masterpiece in the end. Obviously, any collector would monopolize it. So, I had a thought. Let's paint this and distribute it to the people of this world."

Big Mama was at a loss for words.

It was the same. The little boy in front of her was saying the same thing. How was this possible? She never told anyone her dream. A coincidence? Or destiny? What word could explain this phenomenon?

Big Mama liked art, but such art was mostly dominated by a handful of rich collectors. Thus, she entered the world of counterfeit art. She was living in an alley right now, but one day, she wanted to spread her ideals around the world.

However, how did this boy come to know all her thoughts? Furthermore, the Trail of the Sunset that her dead husband liked was the first thing she wanted to copy and distribute.

It felt as if all her clothes had been stripped off for the public to see. She was ashamed. It was the first time she felt like this.

Big Mama asked in a trembling voice.

“That, can you tell me where you took the photo? Obviously, you want to make a deal.”

“But we lied to each other.”

“.....”



“So once again, I would like to offer a deal.”

“W-what...?”

“Please accept me as a disciple.”

Big Mama’s eyes shook.

She was troubled.

Tae-hyuk had the Trail of the Sunset that she wanted. On the contrary, Tae-hyuk wanted her to teach him.

If she accepted this deal, then there would be a struggle to steal each other’s possessions.

Many questions surfaced and disappeared in a period of less than 10 seconds. In the end, she reached an answer.

Big Mama laughed and said.

“Then you should start with cleaning.”

---

Tae-hyuk confirmed the message on the Demon Revealing

Mirror.

[Crime Skill: Forgery Knowledge has been learnt.]

-You can create one item after analysis completion.

-The quality of the finished object depends on your dexterity stat.

-Due to low proficiency, the quality of the goods made is poor.

-It has been registered in the temporary skills window.

‘It is like I thought!’

He became Big Mama’s disciple and had learned a new crime skill.

In order to perfectly master it, he needed to use the new skill to deal Big Mama a big blow.

But was this really the only way to learn a crime skill? What if he learned how to make art for Big Mama here?

Experimenting would give him more information on the crime

skills.

This skill was affected by dexterity, meaning that dexterity would increase as he practiced the skill. Just like how he learned to study from An Eun-young, he would learn forgery from Big Mama.

Naturally, he needed to improve his dexterity to upgrade to a 'Noble' status. And after he perfectly mastered the skill...

'I will take everything away from Big Mama.'

Big Mama had Tae-hyuk's Rosario. He would take everything away from her. Naturally, that included regaining Rosario.

Tae-hyuk stared at Big Mama's back with sly, upturned eyes.

# Chapter 24 - Power Deployment

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Two weeks had passed since Seo Tae-hyuk received a month long suspension due to Park Sung-kwang's efforts. By the way, it was much better than when he went to school every day.

In the morning, he did homework and helped Ha-ran with her household chores. Then, he ate lunch and went to work in Big Mama's store. He completed chores according to her instructions until late in the afternoon. In the evening, he went to An Eun-young's house to study.

He was so busy that it felt like there were 36 hours in a day.

His cognitive abilities increased considerably.

‘Shall I check it?’

As Tae-hyuk cleaned Big Mama's store, he took out the Demon Revealing Mirror to check his stats.

Stats: Stamina (61), Intelligence (25), Agility (24), Dexterity (34)

‘Intelligence has increased by 11. Dexterity by three.’

The studying skill was indeed a big help, and Intelligence was the one stat that was rising the quickest. An Eun-young was amazed by his performance.

‘... By the way, stamina decreased again.’

Stamina was steadily decreasing compared to his other stats. His stats needed 50 points for his ranking to be upgraded to ‘Noble’.

His stamina was overflowing. However, his stomach hurt when he saw that his stats were decreasing.

‘I should exercise.’

Studying also needed stamina. It was the real thing.

He was able to see his stats after obtaining the Spying skill. He knew the direct numerical values, so it was more efficient to train his body.

“Tae-hyuk. Please clean this up.”

“Aye, aye, Sir!”

Tae-hyuk removed the dust in the store according to Big Mama’s instructions.

She didn't teach him any skills as soon as he became a disciple. Big Mama gave Tae-hyuk a job and started forging artworks.

‘Just watching her is increasing my skill proficiency.’

[You have watched a master craftsman work.]

[Proficiency will increase rapidly.]

[Forgery skill 17%]

The skills that he learned could be elevated by raising the level of proficiency.

‘Although I can't learn any other skills since there is only one temporary skill window, this isn't that bad.’

He was able to raise his dexterity stat. Although it was currently lower than stamina, it wasn't a bad performance.

‘The most important thing in forging art is how it looks.’

There were artworks at least several hundred years old. There were just as many that were under 100 years old. In order to make fakes of such things, the perfection of the work was a basic thing. It was important for the artwork to look as old as the original year.

If a 300 year old painting was as smooth as if it was painted yesterday, a child wouldn't be deceived.

‘Applying a specially prepared solution to the surface of the painting will make it age fast! Isn't this really good? Uh, wah! From the stains to the insect marks!’

It took a long time to create a counterfeit artwork. A person could take a week to a month. However, Big Mama completed a perfect quality work in only three days.

He couldn't help but feel admiration.

‘Uh, my proficiency has gone up by one.’

Once his proficiency level reached a certain level, he could know the meaning of what Big Mama was doing.

Tae-hyuk's eyes shone.

He decided to do his own forgeries once his proficiency increased a bit more.

There were two weeks remaining until he had to go back to school. Based on the current rate that his intelligence was rising, he would be able to achieve his desired grades.

He first decided to concentrate on acquiring the Forgery skill.

---

“Crazy...”

Cho Kang-suk clicked his tongue.

He was a homicide detective, and had 10 years of practical experience before achieving this rank. He was familiar with seeing these things.

Even so, he frowned as he saw the body in front of him.

The body was odd.

He couldn't say anything.

Cho Kang-suk skillfully ordered his men to form a blockade around the building. Signs that prohibited access were put up and the crime scene was closed.

Inspector Kim Do-shik, who arrived late, asked him. He would be the person in charge of this case.

“Detective Cho! Did you call the coroner?”

“Oh, Inspector-nim arrived? He'll be here in a minute.”



Kim Do-shik pulled back the tarp covering the corpse.

He couldn't help but moan.

“What is this...?”

He raised a finger and pressed it firmly against the skin of the corpse.

“I don't think she was drowned.”

The corpse still seemed alive.

“Yes... The coroner can only know after conducting the autopsy. It is likely that she was suffocated.”

“Hrmm. Is it strangulation?”

“No strangulation injuries were found on the neck.”

Kim Do-shik quietly covered the body with the tarp again.

Cho Kang-suk reported what he had found so far.

“A female. Her age is in the early 20s, and her clothes have yet to

be found. I have pulled the fingerprints to check her identity. The person who discovered it was a student who lived nearby, and I have someone taking care of them. After their shock has subsided, I will check the exact circumstances of the discovery.”

“But Detective Cho, it is still too premature to say. Have you ever seen a body like this?”

Cho Kang-suk shook his head.

“The stomach... is her stomach full?”

“... Yes. It is like she is pregnant.”

The two people’s faces darkened.

No matter how long they worked, they still couldn’t get used to this.

“Ah! The coroner has arrived!”

“Yes. First, let’s see what he has to say. But really... This body is odd.”

“Yes...”

Cho Kang-suk couldn’t answer properly. He was more qualified

to beat up a gangster than to do something like this.

“Then, tell me when the results come out.”

Kim Do-shik sighed again.

“This world is really going crazy.”

The case proceeded quickly. The identity of the body was revealed and the signs were also accurate. However, their questions weren't completely answered.

Detective Cho Kang-suk asked the coroner.

“Min-soo. How did she die?”

Park Min-soo was a similar age to Kang-suk. In addition, they worked closely together so they were close friends.

Park Min-soo touched the glasses he was wearing and said.

“There are two signs. First, her intestines ruptured from drinking more water than they could tolerate, causing a blockage. She suffocated.”

Kang-suk's face turned white.

“... She was tortured with water.”

Park Min-soo shook his head.

“It doesn’t seem like it. Do you know what happens when someone is tortured with water? In the beginning of the torture, they take some breaths. Eventually, the brain won’t receive enough oxygen and they will lose consciousness. Then what would happen? The human body would somehow try to breathe in order to live. They will take a deep breath. However, there would be no air so eventually, water would get into the lungs. This breath is the end... It is over. The lung cells are destroyed. The body will die, and any artificial respiration is useless.”

Park Min-soo spoke calmly. However, the contents were creepy.

Cho Kang-suk asked.

“So why isn’t it water torture?”

“If someone was tortured with water, then they would naturally get water into their lungs. However, there is no water in her lungs. Therefore, this means that she drank a lot of water, but of her own will. And... The body didn’t lose consciousness until the last minute.”

It was cruel.

She drank water until her stomach expanded and she died.

But she didn't lose consciousness? Even until the moment she died from suffocation?

Cho Kang-suk bit his lip. He bit too hard and blood came out.

Park Min-soo approached Cho Kang-suk and whispered.

“Ah right. There were no signs of rape. It isn't a rape killing.”

“.....”

Kang-suk's face distorted.

He muttered quietly.

“Please, I wish that this body is the first and last.”

Park Min-soo also nodded.

“Yes, I wish that as well. Kang-suk. Let me look at that crazy bastard's face. Please catch the culprit.”

Kang-suk replied with cold eyes.

“I will catch them... I must!”

---

After hearing about the body, Kim Do-shik called this the ‘watering hippo’ case.

That day, a special investigation headquarters was created.

Among the team members, Cho Kang-suk was included.

## Chapter 25 - Power Deployment #2

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As the proficiency of the Forgery skill went over 20, it became impossible to increase the skill any further just by watching Big Mama work.

Tae-hyuk was distressed.

‘I think I have reached 100 proficiency...’

It seemed like he now had to practice directly. The necessary tools were purchased, so the problem now was the location.

‘Isn’t it hard to do it in Big Mama’s store?’

He didn’t want to show his skill to Big Mama.

However, he couldn’t do it at home. A bunch of chemicals were needed, and he couldn’t risk the health of his family.

‘Where is a suitable space? Preferably a well-ventilated space... It is better if I have some artwork to copy.’

The best option was to have his own studio, but that required time and money. He might have a chance to get another skill. He wanted to progress at a rapid pace.

‘The right space... ah!’

He knew a great place.

‘Why didn’t I think of the art room?’

It was equipped with everything Tae-hyuk needed.

The only problem was that he was currently suspended.

‘Well, it isn’t a problem if I obtain a school uniform and pretend to be a transfer student.’

B High School was near Big Mama’s store. It was a big school with over 1,000 students. They were the optimal conditions for hiding.

Tae-hyuk made sure he had money in his wallet and rushed to the clothing store. He could buy a used uniform, but if he wanted to pretend to be a transfer student, it was better to get a new one. It was expensive, but he still had some money left over from catching Park Sung-kwang.

‘Think of it as an investment.’

As he opened the door, he saw a man reading a newspaper.

Tae-hyuk looked around the store where various uniforms were hanging and said.



“I’m here to buy a uniform.”

The owner took a look at Tae-hyuk and replied.

“Female uniforms aren’t for sale.”

“... I’m going to wear it.”

“You’re going to wear a female school uniform?”

In the end, he introduced himself as a transfer student, and was finally able to receive a proper response.

‘Why is it so hard to buy a uniform! Treating somebody like a criminal!’

Well, technically, he was a criminal.

After purchasing the uniform, Tae-hyuk went to buy the other tools. It didn’t matter what type of artwork it was, the rise in proficiency was similar. He had to decide on something that was easier than forging sculptures or ceramics.

Eventually, Tae-hyuk decided on painting.

‘My training will begin earnestly tomorrow!’

Tae-hyuk's eyes burned with the fires of enthusiasm.

---

Since a few days ago, Tae-hyuk started having dinner at home.

It seemed like his body would be unable to hold on if he continued to eat Eun-young's food. An Eun-young was disappointed when she found out that Tae-hyuk had already eaten. Why?

When Tae-hyuk arrived home, an unexpected guest greeted him.

"Tae-hyuk is home."

"Kang-suk hyung!"

Cho Kang-suk was setting out the meal on the table. He recently became quite close to Ha-ran, and thus came here to eat.

Tae-hyuk asked when he saw Kang-suk's pale complexion.

"What's going on? You look pretty tired."

Kang-suk sighed.

“It’s been pretty busy lately. I couldn’t eat rice, so I came over when Ha-ran invited me to dinner.”

“I see. Did a case happen nearby?”

“Well, there is something like that. It is something that isn’t very good. At any rate, be careful when you walk around at night.”

“Then I should go pick up Noona when you go home from work.”

“T-That isn’t necessary!”

“Then why did you say to be careful?”

“I’ll go pick her up!”

“.....”

Tae-hyuk was at a loss for words.

Well, it was difficult for passion to heat up.

Kang-suk scratched his head and blushed as he spoke.

“But, I heard you were suspended?”

“Yes. How did you know?”

“Haha! Don’t be too embarrassed. It isn’t a big deal. I’m also...”

Kang-suk started to talk about his school days.

Tae-hyuk’s hands clenched into a fist as he heard about the part where Kang-suk fought 17:1.

Originally, these type of stories were exaggerated. However, it was really possible if it was Kang-suk. It wouldn’t be strange for people to fall down when hit by a thick forearm. Above all, the description was very real.

‘I wished I had a combat skill rather than something strange like Robbery. However, why is there no combat skill?’

He was going to try out the Forgery skill.

With that in mind, he started eating the dinner that Ha-ran had prepared.

Suddenly, he had an ominous feeling.

Kang-suk was really busy.

He didn’t respond when asked for the reason.

Maybe...

It couldn't be?

---

‘I think it is the perfect plan!’

Tae-hyuk made a satisfied expression as he stared at the tools that he had prepared on the desk in the art room.

He had passed a considerable number of people on the way here. However, no one noticed that Tae-hyuk wasn't a student of B High School. He only occasionally heard ‘was there such a thug in this school?’ as people walked past. It felt a bit unpleasant, but it wasn't too big of a big problem.

“Hah... There seems to be self-study in this school at night.”

So there was no one in the art room. He could work here for two hours.

After that, he had to go to An Eun-young's house.

“Then, shall I begin?”

He shone the Demon Revealing Mirror on a landscape painting in

the art room.

[Forgery has been used.]

-Analyzing the specified artwork.

[Practice Landscape Painting]

-A landscape painted to improve the painting skill.

-The detailed information is hidden because the rating is too low.

-Tools needed: Paper, pigment, color, soluble oil...

‘The rating?’

At first, he thought it was a painting that wasn't too big of a big deal. However, there were restrictions due to the rating.

‘If I want to use the skill properly, then I'll have to raise the rating.’

In order to do that, he had to learn the Forgery skill quickly. After analyzing and collecting the items specified by the skill, he moved his body.

“Uh, uh!”

The brush in his right hand started to move over the canvas.

It was like it was possessed!

He received a notification on the Demon Revealing Mirror.

[The quality of the artwork is lower than your dexterity.]

[You have perfectly copied the painting!]

[Proficiency will rise rapidly!]

Tae-hyuk could perfectly paint the landscape, despite his dexterity only being 30 points.

Tae-hyuk admired the finished painting.

“Wah... Isn’t it really the same thing?”

The performance of the Forgery skill was amazing. If the original wasn't framed, then it was impossible to tell which one was genuine.

There was one big difference. The landscape painting was displayed in the art room. Since it was a space used by many people, there were traces of the hands that touched it. He moved it until it was the same. Now, no one would notice if he walked out with the original.

“... I need to learn it as soon as possible.”

He checked and his proficiency increased by one. At this speed, he would be able to raise it by 2~3 more points today.

Tae-hyuk made a satisfied face as he looked for the next piece to be copied.

It was at that moment.

Rustle!

Tae-hyuk heard a strange sound and looked around.

“... What?”

Tae-hyuk swallowed his saliva. Someone was watching.



He had memorized the structure of the school since he was sneaking in.

The art room was located in the special activities building, and students studying in the main building wouldn't come here.

Who...?

Tae-hyuk felt sweat flowing down.

“What, the window is open?”

He had confirmed that they were all closed when entering the art room. However, now one was open.

It meant one thing.

‘Someone was watching me work!’

Tae-hyuk wasn't the only uninvited guest in B High School.

There was one more...

---

Kang-suk heard the call through his walkie-talkie and exclaimed.

“W-h-a-t! A second body was found?!”

–Yes, that’s right. Please contact Inspector-nim. Come to the incident site!

The state of the corpse was the same as the first incident. It was an act by the same person.

In the end, the thing he was concerned about happened.

Kang-suk bit his lip, causing blood to flow into his mouth. However, he couldn’t care about it right now.

Kang-suk punched the wall.

There was a loud bang sound, and it seemed like he wouldn’t be able to endure.

The ‘watering hippo’ murderer had occurred again.

Kang-suk started the car and asked.

“Where? I’ll go right now. Seal the area so that not even one ant can escape!”

The answer was heard on the walkie-talkie.

-A warehouse not far from B High School.

“There again?”

The first body was discovered in a place not far from there.

“Send me the exact location.”

-Understood.

“I will catch that hippo. Just wait, Kang-suk hyung is coming.”

Kang-suk slammed on the car’s accelerator.

## Chapter 26 - Power Deployment #3

---

For the next day and the day after, Tae-hyuk could feel someone's gaze while he was working in the art room.

Tae-hyuk showed an irritated expression as he wiped off the moisture from his brush.

“Ah, it is like having a pebble in my sneakers.”

While he could ignore it, it was still annoying and constantly jarring.

He remembered the saying of a person in a marathon who was eliminated just before the finish line.

‘The hardest part of the race wasn't the other people pressuring him from behind, but the small piece of sand in his shoes.’

That was Tae-hyuk's state right now. He had four crime skills, but he didn't have the skill to detect another person.

“Who the hell is it?”

He couldn't bear it and finally shouted.

The door of the art room opened like there was a reaction.

“Who’s in here?”

A schoolgirl with short hair that exposed her ears entered.

Tae-hyuk was filled with embarrassment. He was illegally occupying the art room. He felt sorry.

“Ahaha... Hello. I was just painting.”

The schoolgirl came in and examined him.

“Are you in the art department? I know that the art department was closed due to a lack of resources.”

“I’m just a student who is interested in painting.”

Tae-hyuk smiled as innocently as possible. This was a workshop that he was barely able to find, so he didn’t want to be kicked out of here.

“I see. I’m actually retired, but I was also in the art department. Are you in the first grade?”

“I’m in the second grade.”

“It is the first time I’ve seen you...”

Tae-hyuk gave his pre-prepared excuse.

“Ah, I just transferred this week.”

“A transfer student! I am Lee Hana. If you are interested in the art department, then I will let you know the name of the teacher who is the adviser.

“Haha... I will think about it. Oh right, my name is Lee Cheol-su.”

Tae-hyuk gave her a pseudonym.

He met someone a few days after starting to work here.

He didn't want to advertise that he wasn't a student at this school.

Lee Hana approached Tae-hyuk, then she laughed softly as she said,

“Can I see what you are doing?”

“Yes. Here.”

Lee Hana looked at the painting that Tae-hyuk copied. Her face

was filled with surprise.

“Wah! Wah... Did you really paint this?”

“I am practicing drawing by copying art.”

“It’s really great! Have you ever gone to art school? I will go to the adviser immediately. We need such a talent in the art department!”

Lee Hana spoke excitedly.

Tae-hyuk was silent for a moment. He had just copied the original with a skill, so it was strange to hear such praise.

“I-It isn’t that great. I merely copied the brushstrokes.”

“Don’t be shy! Well, if I look closer, then I can see that there are definitely a few missing details.”

Lee Hana squinted at Tae-hyuk’s painting again.

“Is it not enough?”

“This figure is drawn with a simple technique, so you can never perfectly copy the original. It is withdrawn? Do you understand the difference between this painting and a withdrawn work?”

Tae-hyuk shook his head. He was just a high school student who could use crime skills, and didn't have a profound knowledge on art.

Lee Hana laughed like she was glad to discover a new talent.

“While your painting doesn't have a soul, you have great technique. You literally copied the painting that you saw, but you won't be able to move the heart of the person who painted it.”

“Soul?”

“Yes. Do you know what type of heart this painting was drawn with?”

Lee Hana pointed to the original painting that Tae-hyuk had copied.

It was a landscape painting that depicted a forest where the falling rain had stopped, and a beam of light was shining through the clouds.

Tae-hyuk replied honestly.

“A wonderful landscape. It feels like a living forest.

“Doesn't it? The rain has stopped, and the forest is full of life. It



is a place that I really like. When I die, I would like to die in a place like this. Everything felt so vivid when I was painting it. I was so grateful to be alive.”

Suddenly, Tae-hyuk discovered a strange fact in Lee Hana’s words.

“Uh, then Sunbae painted this?”

“Omo, did you only just find out? It is something that I painted in my first year.”

“I only used it as a reference because I thought it was the best painting here. I didn’t know that it was Sunbae’s.”

“Ahaha. At any rate, bend the brush. I’ll tell you about the brush strokes.”

From then on, Lee Hana’s drawing lesson began.

Tae-hyuk focused on her words, ignoring the notifications from the Demon Revealing Mirror.

He could guess what the contents were.

While his skill was enough to copy the artwork, he learned that it was also important to read the heart of the picture.

“Ah. It is already this time... I’ll have to end here today. Think about what you have learned today, and you will know why the painting was drawn.”

Lee Hana gently winked.

Tae-hyuk used the moment to quickly glance at the Demon Revealing Mirror, where numerous messages had appeared.

[Your understanding of art has deepened.]

[The Forgery skill proficiency has increased by a lot!]

[More sophisticated work is now possible.]

After checking the skill, his proficiency level had gone up by around 20 points. He couldn’t miss this good chance.

Tae-hyuk asked with a puppy-like expression.

“Thank you, Hana sunbae. Can I see you again next time?”

“Ahaha! I’m a busy person. Well, it does feel good.”

Hana laughed like she enjoyed it.

Tae-hyuk was startled.

All of a sudden, he felt that Lee Hana's face was familiar.

‘Wait. Surely she isn't that Lee Hana?’

She reminded him of someone. She was a genius female painter who became so famous that she held a solo exhibition in Paris in her early 20s.

‘It is obviously the same name. She was primarily a landscape illustrator. Eh...? Don't tell me?’

She was famous for the dreamlike atmosphere of her paintings.

‘Wait. Then I was copying the painting of a person like that?’

He felt strange all of a sudden, as he never imagined that a celebrity would be so close.

It had only been a few days since Tae-hyuk first held a paintbrush. But now he had a discussion about painting with a genius painter. It was like practicing dribbling in front of Messi.

‘I heard that she went straight to Europe after graduating from high school. I guess that is the reason why she seems to be so strangely relaxed for a third year in high school.’

Tae-hyuk looked at Lee Hana, and suddenly felt like there was a subtle halo around her.

Lee Hana waved her hand as she turned around to leave.

“Wahahat ~ ah, that’s right. There are rumours that a stalker is wandering around the school. Have you ever seen someone suspicious lately?”

“Stalker?”

“Yes. They say he is a voyeur.”

“I haven’t seen anyone suspicious.”

Tae-hyuk replied with a face that made it seem like he didn’t know anything.

In fact, he was the most suspicious person in this school.

“If you find something then please tell me. If the incident becomes bigger and the police comes, then this place might be closed down.”

“This would be difficult.”

“Right? I think so as well! Hahat!”

Lee Hana laughed and exited.

---

After Tae-hyuk was sure that she was gone, his smile disappeared.

“Stalker or a voyeur.”

Lee Hana spoke calmly but he got the impression that she was nervous.

Of course, he had never seen such a person. But he had some ideas.

“Then, the eyes looking at me...”

The mystery was unravelled.

Tae-hyuk searched the art room, and noticed several hidden cameras that were installed throughout.

“Ohuhuhu. I got the bastard!”

This was what had been missing.

He discovered traces of the crime, and received a message about a new skill.

[Crime Skill: X-ray Vision has been learnt.]

– You can see through things (this doesn't apply to creatures).

-The criteria to fully learn it has yet to be met.

-A skill has already been registered in the temporary skill window.

If you are register a new skill, then the existing skill will disappear.

Tae-hyuk almost screamed at that moment.

X-ray Vision! It was literally a man's romance.

“Crazy, my heart!”

He cried out.

It was impossible to make a living with X-ray Vision.

However, that's why it was better. He could literally see through the clothes that people were wearing.

“Ohu, ohuhuhu, ohahahahat!”

The feature was so perfect that Tae-hyuk felt like crying.

He then recalled the last messages on the Demon Revealing Mirror.

“Wait a minute. There is something strange.”

He was so excited about the X-ray Vision skill that he hadn't properly read the rest of the message. Tae-hyuk felt anxious and confirmed it in the Demon Revealing Mirror. His face fell like a dog that had been neutered.

“... I have to give up Forgery to learn X-ray Vision?”

It was the limit of temporary registration. The skill was temporary, so if he learned a new one, the existing skill would disappear.

He would miss the opportunity to learn it forever.

“Ugh, no! Then, is it asking me to choose between X-ray Vision and Forgery?”

It was like choosing between jajangmyeon and jjampong. It was a fateful decision.

Tae-hyuk bit his lip. X-ray Vision was a skill that couldn't be abandoned. But Forgery...

“Ugh, damn! What is this?”

Tae-hyuk's hands hovered over X-ray Vision, which he had always desired.

He then stabbed his thigh with a sharp brush tip. He felt as if his spirit had come back due to the shock.

“Goodbye, my pink life...”

He couldn't give up Forgery that had over 50 proficiency points.

Eventually, Tae-hyuk tearfully abandoned the X-ray Vision skill. Tae-hyuk sat in the chair for a while with a sense of emptiness.

Then he muttered.

“Even though I didn't get it... I will catch the strange voyeur.”

There were rumours of a voyeur.



Maybe he wasn't enjoying it alone, but was spreading it on the Internet.

If the incident became bigger, then the police would be dispatched, which would result in an almost 100% chance of this place being closed down. They would search through everything to collect evidence.

Tae-hyuk had only just found this workshop. Besides, he was able to raise his proficiency at a high speed due to Lee Hana. He was unable to abandon this place.

For one thing, he would never do anything completely selfless.

Tae-hyuk put away his brushes and paints and stood up. He set up a trap to catch the enemy.

## Chapter 27 - Power Deployment #4

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B High School was a big school with changing rooms separate from the gymnasium.

However, once the number of students increased, people who broke the established rules appeared. It was a hassle for one to go to the locker rooms that were far away, and for those who just wanted to do special activities.

Therefore, there were some who changed clothes in the classrooms of the special activities building.

This was what the voyeur was aiming for. The boundaries in the special activities building were loose compared to those in the locker room. There were many hiding spots to place the camera. It wasn't even a changing room in the first place, so there weren't many people who would ever think that cameras would be installed in such places.

‘That is the psychology of the voyeur.’

Tae-hyuk searched through the special activities classrooms and looked for hidden cameras. In the end, he found more than 30.

They were high definition cameras, and were no longer recording because their memory was full. Fortunately, Tae-hyuk wasn't recorded on the cameras.

‘Can I use this?’

First of all, one thing had become clear.

‘The person who installed the hidden cameras knows the inside of the school perfectly.’

They knew which classroom was used for which purpose. The cameras were hidden in places with good angles. The voyeur had calculated all of this, which was an impossible feat unless they were an insider.

‘If so, it is a problem.’

In this situation, Tae-hyuk was an outsider. If he did something wrong, then he could be mistaken as the voyeur. In the end, collecting the evidence alone didn’t mean Tae-hyuk would catch him. He had to find the crime scene.

The difficulty level was much higher than usual.

“By the way... No matter how much I think about it, X-ray Vision is way too good to pass up.”

There was a chance that X-ray Vision could be obtained again later in the future. He couldn’t just give up Forgery that he had invested two weeks into.

“... Don't be so instinctual, Seo Tae-hyuk! I need Forgery right now!”

In order to regain Rosario that Big Mama had, he needed the fully mastered Forgery skill.

It was necessary to first find out exactly where the voyeur worked.

The cameras didn't have a long range transmission feature, so recorded content had to be directly collected. Tae-hyuk placed the cameras back in their original positions and installed a timer that could only be checked by him.

There were state of the art technologies that could notify him when it was touched. Of course, Tae-hyuk had no such abilities, which was why he took full advantage of his skills.

Tae-hyuk placed common items like a glass cup or a book near the places where the cameras were hidden. If someone touched the items, then they would fall.

Of course, if there were only one or two items, then they might not be touched. However, there were more than 30 cameras, so the voyeur had to make a mistake at least once.

Tae-hyuk was aiming for that.

‘I didn't know that Spying had such a feature.’

Spying could see the titles and abilities of the target, which didn't just apply to people, but also to objects. If he registered a glass cup in advance, then he could check its status.

‘Well, I won't be able to tell if it is just touched. Destruction is different.’

He would get alerts through the Demon Revealing Mirror.

For example, [Glass Cup] would transform into [Broken Glass Cup].

By taking advantage of this, he could use things commonly seen as a security device.

It was a hidden use of the Spying skill.

‘Now, the installation is done!’

Tae-hyuk set up traps in locations that he had unknowingly touched while collecting the hidden cameras. This would tell him when the voyeur was active.

Now he just had to wait quietly.

“Then, should I go to Eun-young?”

A few days ago, he scored 80 points on a mock exam that she had given him. Compared to the first time, his score had risen by more than 20 points.

There were 10 days left before the retest.

His preparations were slowly progressing.

---

Today, he was in a good condition and his intelligence increased by three, making a total of 28.

It was almost seven times higher than when he first received the ‘Spying’ skill.

‘Well, I don’t think my head has improved by seven times.’

However, he recently felt like things had been going well so far. The new use of the Spying skill was also a by-product of his increased intelligence.

One worry was that the voyeur would be too cautious and wouldn’t get caught in the trap.

‘Then I would have to go to plan B...’

However, his worries were groundless. Out of a total of 30 traps, six gave him notifications.

‘The glass cup broke. The receipt was torn. The tissue... Ugh, it is now dirty.’

All the common items told him about the actions of the voyeur.

‘Isn’t this better than I thought?’

Just installing it let him know his opponent’s activity time. He also knew the route the voyeur walked.

‘Based on his speed, he definitely spends longer inside the rooms.’

Tae-hyuk confirmed that all the voices required for the Voice Modulation skill were registered.

He needed the voices of girls A, B, C, and D to catch the opponent. The security guard was also necessary. And finally, Cho Kang-suk’s voice.

The voyeur started his activities in the late evening.

Tae-hyuk decided to practice painting until that time. The proficiency of Forgery increased rapidly as he thought about what he learned from Lee Hana. Not only did he copy Lee Hana’s

landscape painting, he also copied various other things.

The important thing was to figure out the mindset of the person who painted it. Even if he painted the image with the same technique, there would still be a difference in understanding.

Tae-hyuk made a comparison between the two pieces.

He looked at what he painted before Lee Hana's lesson, and what he painted after it. They were obviously works created with the same proficiency in the Forgery skill.

However, after understanding the thoughts and feelings of the original artists, he could feel a strange vitality exuding from the painting. It seemed that it would come alive at any moment.

“Uhuh! It is difficult, difficult!”

The profound world of art!

Tae-hyuk yawned and stretched.

The proficiency of Forgery was still over 50 points, so his technique had noticeably improved. He could now almost completely copy high school level paintings.

“... I have to get ready.”



He pulled out a bromide photograph from his pocket.

It was a compelling photo of the back of a girl changing clothes from a nude magazine popular with soldiers.

Tae-hyuk triggered the Forgery skill and started to copy the nude photograph.

In a way, this was also an artwork.

However, it was the first time using Forgery on a photo to transfer to a painting. He also had to draw it four times bigger for it to be mistaken as a real person.

‘Think of the mindset... As much as possible! He has to be excited to see this! Therefore, it has to be as sensual as possible!’

“I-It is finished!”

After more than an hour of work, a painting depicting the back of a girl changing clothes was finished.

[A great work of art has been completed.]

[You have perfectly understood the artist’s mind.]

[It seems as though it is alive.]

[Your Forgery skill proficiency has increased tremendously.]

“Ahem... I’m ashamed...”

Tae-hyuk coughed.

In fact, it was like catching a moth. The mindset of the person who took a photo like this was obvious.

Of course, it wasn’t the same quality as the photo. If someone looked closely, then they could tell it was a painting. However, the atmosphere of the painting was more tangible than the original.

He felt dirty. At that moment, Tae-hyuk’s face was red. He was excited to see the painting.

Tae-hyuk blocked his nose and muttered.

“W-Why does it feel like blood is dripping down?”

He could now understand the feelings of the original photographer.

“Hum hum. Then, I will have to install this on the voyeur’s

established path.”

He had a premonition that there would be more to the trap than he thought.

Tae-hyuk’s plan was simple.

Install the painting of a girl changing clothes in an empty classroom. The curtains were covered, creating a breathtaking situation where only the silhouette could be seen. He would then use Voice Modulation to mimic a female voice and give a sense of presence. This scene was just too amazing for the voyeur to pass up. Naturally, he would concentrate on that place. Then, Tae-hyuk would use the voice of the guards and Kang-suk to start hunting a rabbit.

In the hallway, he painted wall paintings with the Forgery skill. People wouldn’t be able to make a normal judgment if they were embarrassed. If the police suddenly entered, then the voyeur would start to freak out.

However, Tae-hyuk changed the structure of the special activities building. He painted hallways on the walls with the Forgery skill.

Under normal circumstances, the voyeur would never be fooled. However, that would change if situation was urgent. The voyeur would be moved along Tae-hyuk’s desired route.

“The special activities building turns off the lights after school.

In a confused state, it would be hard for the voyeur to tell if it was a painting or if it was reality.

Tae-hyuk looked at the piece of paper on his desk.

On it were detailed instructions about the route that he would drive his opponent down.

“Then, let’s start with plan ‘I’m alone in school!’”

## Chapter 28 - Power Deployment #5

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Tae-hyuk first marked his own building map and easily divided it into several sections. He then proceeded to install the traps at the marked locations.

“Well, let’s check it out.”

On the map, he had carefully written down directions on how to direct the voyeur. If he followed those exact directions, then he would be able to put his opponent into a corner.

However, some unexpected variables could occur. Tae-hyuk began visualizing several different situations, and how he deal with them.

In the meantime, it was time to start self-studying at night. All sound disappeared from the special activities building.

“Now... is it 7:05 p.m? It’s around the time for the voyeur to move.”

It was also time for Tae-hyuk to take action.

Lastly, Tae-hyuk confirmed all of his equipment. Everything he needed was currently gathered.

“I’ll go and get ready for the guests.”

B High School's self-study started at 7:00 p.m, which was when the supervisor would wander around to check attendance. All the students were supposed to be in the classroom. Once attendance was checked, the supervisor would loosen up. Some students would the special activities building to do other things or even to run away.

The voyeur was aiming for this short gap in timing.

“Now is the time to do something in secret.”

While the main building had the latest security systems, the old wooden building didn't even have a common CCTV one. If it wasn't for the geographical advantage of being close to the playground, no one would ever change clothes here.

Tae-hyuk was hiding in the A-17 area, the place of the first trap. He also spotted a window that was slightly open, which was where the opponent would probably enter through here.

7:07 p.m.

The opponent moved.

Kkiiik-

There was no need to check the Demon Revealing Mirror. It was

the sound of a window opening.

A black shadow was revealed by the backlight. Tae-hyuk minimized his sound as much as possible as he watched the movements of the opponent.

‘He isn’t collecting the cameras.’

The voyeur merely took out the memory from the camera and checked its contents. He made a small sound, as if he didn’t like the content shown. He reset the data and reinstalled the camera. Everything took less than 10 seconds.

‘If this was a sport in the Olympics, then would he get a gold medal?’

The black shadow finished his work in an instant and left the room. It wasn’t something he had done only once or twice.

However, the voyeur would have never imagined that someone else was hiding in here.

‘The binding trap is installed in area A-12. Let’s move right away.’

Tae-hyuk left his hiding place and chased behind the voyeur. The opponent had stopped at a place 20 metres away. He had activated the binding trap and his feet were tied.

After confirming it, Tae-hyuk moved to the A-13 area.

‘Now is the most important part.’

Tae-hyuk used the Demon Revealing Mirror to activate Voice Modulation.

He chose female student A that he had prepared in advance.

“... Ah.”

After Tae-hyuk confirmed that his voice was changed, he spoke loudly enough for the voyeur to hear.

“W-What do I do? I was tired from exercising and forgot!”

Then he changed voices to student B.

“The seniors saw me sleeping and just left! I have to change clothes and go straight to the classroom.”

He changed it back.

“Y-yes. Hurry!”



Voice Modulation could only imitate people's voices. He had to create the other sound effects himself. For example, the sound of clothes being taken off.

Sururuk.

The sound of clothes rubbing against skin was heard in the darkness.

The voyeur swallowed his saliva.

Tae-hyuk felt disgusted.

‘D-Do I really have to do this?’

He took off his uniform, leaving him in only short-sleeves and shorts.

‘Student C will emerge at this point!’

Tae-hyuk ducked out of the classroom and crouched down in front of it.

He shouted. It sounded like he was speaking from outside the classroom.

“Sunbae-nim! Big trouble! There's a frenzy outside because the

voyeur entered the school!”

He felt a presence in the hallway. The voyeur was aghast.

‘Ugh, what is this?’

At that moment, Tae-hyuk felt dizzy.

His body almost collapsed. Tae-hyuk stabbed his thigh with a stick just to keep conscious. He could feel his consciousness coming back.

‘Is it because I used the skill too much?’

This was the first time. Now was the most important part. Tae-hyuk gritted his teeth and imitated the voice of student D with Voice Modulation.

“The guard said that the police are coming! Come out quickly!”

‘... I can’t miss catching the fish. Just a little more...!’

He heard the sound of the voyeur rushing away.

Tae-hyuk forced his legs to move and chased after the opponent.

---

In order to use his skills, stamina was consumed. He had particularly used a lot of it over the past few days. In the end, the burden came rushing in at once.

‘I think I used more last week... Ah, perhaps...’

In that moment, Tae-hyuk recalled An Eun-young’s healthy food. His hands clenched at the thought. Surprisingly, it had supplemented a lot of his stamina. After not eating it for a few days, his body sent out a few signals...

Did he have to eat her food for the rest of his lifetime? At that moment, he had an ominous feeling.

‘Anyway, the target is in area B-4. Shall I give it a try?’

Tae-hyuk imitated the voice of a guard.

“The police officers are here!”

The confused voyeur fell down.

However, he got up through superhuman willpower and started to run.

At that time, a wall appeared in front of the voyeur. If he had looked closely, then he would be able to see that it was just a

painting.

However, in such a panicked state, such a cold judgment was impossible. In the end, he ran to the other side of the hallway to avoid the wall.

A smile flashed on Tae-hyuk's face.

‘As expected, he ran to point C.’

This time, he imitated the voice of Cho Kang-suk.

“I will arrest the criminal who violated the Special Sexual Violence Law! You can remain silent, and any of your remarks can be used against you in court. You can appoint a lawyer and have the lawyer speak for you when asked a question. If you don't have money for a lawyer, you will be appointed a public defender. Do you recognize your rights?”

Tae-hyuk imitated what he saw in movies as much as possible.

The opponent panicked as Tae-hyuk read his version of the Miranda Warning in Cho Kang-suk's voice. Originally, they were words that the police would say only after arresting the criminal. But it was still enough to panic the opponent.

The voyeur heard Cho Kang-suk's cry and started to run faster.

‘Now, go straight. Then you will be very happy.’

Tae-hyuk took a deep breath as he watched as the opponent ran in the direction planned.

He wouldn’t get any merits from catching this criminal. However, he was happy since he could spend the rest of his time practicing Forgery here. That in itself was satisfying enough.

‘Anyway, this time I can’t get any skill...’

No matter how he thought about it, X-ray Vision was a good skill.

If only...

‘Someday, I might get a chance again. At any rate, haven’t I solved the case?’

He felt bittersweet.

This was the end of the B High School voyeur incident. However, something Tae-hyuk hadn’t imagined occurred at this moment.

“Kyaaaaak!”

A female screamed from the place that the voyeur was running to.

“W-who? Aren’t all the students in the main building?”

Students A, B, C and D who remained in the special activities building were hypothetical people created by Tae-hyuk. Did they suddenly pop out in reality?

“Wait a minute. This is the second time I’ve heard that voice... Ah, Hana sunbae!”

Tae-hyuk realized that he had forgotten about her.

Lee Hana went to France after graduating. Due to that, she could live a leisurely life without attending the self-study at night.

‘If I have time then I will come back to teach my cute junior.’

She had obviously said that.

Tae-hyuk ran forward with a sick expression. Lee Hana was in danger.

---

The situation had gone seriously sideways.

The voyeur saw that a witness had suddenly appeared and pulled out a weapon.

He was a middle-aged man wearing a suit, and gave off a meek and intelligent atmosphere. Such a person was a voyeur...

To Tae-hyuk, he was a stranger; however, Lee Hana might know who he was.

Lee Hana alternated her gaze between the criminal and Tae-hyuk with a pale face.

The voyeur asked in a trembling voice.

“I-I-I, right now, chased by police, stay quiet, don’t get hurt, hostage.”

Lee Hana closed her mouth and nodded.

Tae-hyuk gritted his teeth. This situation was even more dangerous. He didn’t know when the confused opponent would use his weapon against Lee Hana.

The rabbit was cornered.

‘Damn. It is entirely my responsibility if Sunbae gets hurt!’

Tae-hyuk released the Voice Modulation skill.

Then he approached the two people.

“Ajusshi. Don’t get excited and listen to me.”

“W-Who are you?”

“A student just passing by.”

“G-Go away!”

“You have a lot of camera equipment, so I can tell what your hobby is. According to Article 14 of the Special Sexual Violence Law, a person who uses a camera or other similar methods to film an unaware person’s body for their own sexual desires is liable for imprisonment up to five years, or a fine of up to 10 million won.”

“You!”

“However, the punishment is double that if you threaten or injure a person with a weapon. So, why don’t you have a conversation with me?”

“I-I know! Fuck! I’m going to kill both of you! No one will know if I run away after killing you!”

The voyeur had now turned into a murderer with a weapon.



However, the blade was now aimed at Seo Tae-hyuk instead of Lee Hana.

‘Thus far, it is as planned.’

Plan A to catch the voyeur had failed. Plan B still remained.

Tae-hyuk slowly reached out to his opponent and said.

“Really? Then...”

## Chapter 29 - Power Deployment #6

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“I-I will kill both of you!”

Tae-hyuk didn't shrink back an inch, despite there being a blade in front of his eyes.

“Try stabbing once. Have you ever killed anyone?”

Tae-hyuk laughed.

A strange madness could be felt in his laughter.

The voyeur was overwhelmed and screamed.

“Aaaagh!”

“Use your fingertips to feel the other person's heartbeat and the feeling of it slowly disappearing. Realize the feeling of taking someone's life. Determination is needed to murder someone.”

Murder. It was the best and the worst crime.

Tae-hyuk had the memory of spending 10 years in a prison with the worst criminals in the country. He had met with dozens of murderers.

Therefore, Tae-hyuk was able to know that the voyeur absolutely wasn't a killer. He was merely an accidental murderer.

Could he really kill anyone from now on though? He could never swing the knife.

Tae-hyuk took a step closer.

“You aren't a murderer, so don't hold a knife!”

“Aaaaack!”

The voyeur stepped back and his feet stepped on thin air.

It was a clear corridor. However, it wasn't really a corridor.

Flutter-

The paper hanging from the ceiling collapsed, as it couldn't withstand the weight of a human. As it fell, a hidden staircase was revealed.

Tae-hyuk had hung a painting of a corridor right before a staircase.

“Kuaaaaak!”

The voyeur rolled down the staircase, collapsing on the ground as he lost consciousness.

“I would like it very much if you go to prison.”

Tae-hyuk recovered the painting he installed.

The place where the opponent fell was the plan B that he had prepared. Thus, he put the operation, the one that he thought of ahead of time, into motion and succeeded perfectly.

Tae-hyuk rubbed his cheeks with his hands as he felt his sweat flooding down the side of his face. He inwardly sighed with relief.

‘I’m glad I didn’t have to use plan C.’

It was to use Robbery to steal the opponent’s weapon. Unlike his other plans, that one had a high possibility of a struggle. It was the one last bastion of self defence.

Tae-hyuk reached out to Lee Hana who was sitting down with a blank expression.

She blinked a few times and regained her spirit as she held Tae-hyuk’s hand.

“... Did you draw this?”

She was looking at the fake corridor that Tae-hyuk drew.

Tae-hyuk laughed.

She was definitely an artist. She was more interested in the painting than the fact that the voyeur was caught.

“I still have a long way to go. If you look more closely, then you will find out that it is fake. What does Hana sunbae think?”

“Uhahat... Yes. It is really clumsy. However, I was still completely tricked. That, the voyeur... He was our school’s assistant principal. He threw himself on the stairs. It is really perfect.”

Hah! A man like that was doing such dirty things...

“Ah, it is a relief. Even Hana sunbae was deceived.”

Hana reached out to the voyeur who had lost consciousness.

“In fact, at first I thought he was going to kill you. Then, you got him to talk. I didn’t know that he would be so frightened. Yes, yes. I have to praise you.”

“Ahaha... He fell before I could stop him.”

Hana smiled brightly, as if she hadn't just been threatened with a knife.

“I sympathize with you. It is like when I have bad luck in front of handsome boys... Ahu!”

“A voyeur who knows the structure of this school... If this fact is known, then the media would be noisy.”

“Ahaha... this school will become famous.”

“It will just become notorious.”

“Well... If fact, I think there is one more case of mistaken identity.”

Tae-hyuk said to Lee Hana. “You are mistaken.”

“I thought of you as an aspiring artist. But you're not, are you?”

“.....”

Tae-hyuk didn't answer Lee Hana's question.

But she reached an answer anyway.

“You are a forgery specialist.”

Tae-hyuk laughed. He realized that he couldn't deceive her when it came to art.

“Aiyah, this person is still alive.”

Tae-hyuk checked the status of the voyeur who had fallen down the stairs. Despite losing consciousness, he was fine.

“Hana sunbae. I have a request. Please don't tell my story to the police, and just say that the voyeur got excited and fell down the stairs.”

“Yes.”

Lee Hana easily nodded without asking why.

“It is like talking about a painting.”

“Yes.”

The artist and forger understood each other.

[You have tricked the opponent with a perfect imitation of reality.]

[The proficiency of the Forgery skill is now 99 points.]

[The proficiency can't rise anymore.]

Tae-hyuk returned to the art room and erased his tracks.

Lee Hana called the police. They would soon come and find the trail of the voyeur. Before that, Tae-hyuk got rid of any evidence that revealed that he had been here.

Then he looked at the message on the Demon Revealing Mirror.

‘The skill proficiency is 99 points!’

There was only one step left before he perfectly mastered the Forgery skill.

‘Now painting won't increase the proficiency anymore.’

Tae-hyuk only needed to complete the last step now.

He already guessed how. He needed to deceive the original owner of the Forgery skill, Big Mama. After doing so, he would take back the Rosario that she had. He would be able to achieve his desired objectives.



“... Then, what are you going to do now?”

“The uninvited person has to disappear.”

Lee Hana, who was sitting on the desk of the art room, laughed.

“Indeed, you’re not a student of this school. I looked up the list of all students and there weren’t any transfer students on there.”

“I think that you are quite sharp.”

Lee Hana swung her legs, her ankle moving in the moonlight.

“Are you leaving now?”

“I got what I wanted faster than I thought. It was literally the best use of my abilities.”

“Uhahat! By the way, what is your name? Can you at least give me your real name?”

Tae-hyuk thought about it for a brief moment. It had been less than a week, but he had learned a lot from Lee Hana. She was his mentor in the ‘Forgery’ skill.

“... Seo Tae-hyuk.”

Lee Hana reached out.

“It is nice to meet you, Seo Tae-hyuk. Alas, goodbye as well. I enjoyed our nightly meetings.”

They exchanged their first greetings and goodbye at the same time.

Lee Hana finished her greeting and jumped down from the desk.

“Once again, thank you for everything Sunbae.”

The police sirens were heard from outside the window.

It was time to disappear.

---

Tae-hyuk looked at the Trail of the Sunset in front of his eyes.

Of course, it was a fake. It was a painting that didn't exist in this world.

Big Mama had been looking for this painting for over a decade. She jumped into the world of imitation art and presented countless forgeries to the world, becoming the crime syndicate representing South Korea. In the end, after 10 years, Big Mama discovered the disastrous truth. The Trail of the Sunset had been burned.

That was the last piece of information that Tae-hyuk had on Big Mama. It was indeed an empty feeling.

Tae-hyuk knocked on the door of Big Mama's store with a complicated expression on his face.

“Omo, Tae-hyuk came. You are a little late today.”

Big Mama was still busy working.

Tae-hyuk placed the covered painting he brought in front of Big Mama.

“What is this?”

“Mama, no. I will speak bluntly to Big Mama. Make a deal with me.”

Big Mama's eyes widened. It was a face that showed she knew nothing. However, Tae-hyuk knew that this was a trick.

“Kim Sang-hyun stole Rosario. Big Mama has it?”

“Yes. But this must mean that you have something to replace it.”

“Of course.”

Big Mama's eyes narrowed. It was faster than she thought.

She used Tae-hyuk to get rid of Kim Sang-hyun. He had hidden many things during their transactions, so she deliberately gave out some faulty information. She didn't know what method Tae-hyuk used, but he got rid of Kim Sang-hyun.

This opponent wasn't an ordinary kid. Big Mama had planned to take advantage of Tae-hyuk as her assistant. She planned for him to stay for a year so she could watch his condition. Anyway, he had his own things that she wanted from him. He wouldn't escape from her hands just yet.

That was what she had thought.

Tae-hyuk pulled off the cloth and showed Big Mama the painting.

"T-This...!"

Big Mama's eyes showed astonishment.

She had been looking for it for several years.

"... The Trail of the Sunset."

Big Mama started to check if the painting was authentic. However, no matter how much she looked, it was genuine.

“Where on earth did you find this? Huh?”

Tae-hyuk said.

“Did you hear about how Yoo Cheol-ho was caught a while ago?”

“It is a famous story, so I can’t not know it.”

“He was actually caught through a tip that I gave.”

“.....”

“Thus, I received his bounty. However, the prosecution wasn’t the only one to give the bounty – the Sungjin Group gave one as well. The daughter of the vice president was one of Yoo Cheol-ho’s victims. Therefore, I went to see them to get the bounty.”

“... You have been there. Then, how did you get this?”

“Isn’t it natural to bring a stolen item to a stolen goods broker?”

It meant that this was stolen.

“Ahaha! Tae-hyuk is right.”

She was a stolen goods broker. She bought stolen goods at a reasonable price.

“So, how much will you buy it for?”

Big Mama was confused.

“... I thought you brought it to make a deal for Rosario.”

“Aish, surely not. Isn’t this worth at least two billion?”

“Stolen goods can’t receive their original price. It will only amount to around 10% of its market price.”

“Wow, that is quite a massive profit.”

“Then Rosario?”

Tae-hyuk spoke naturally.

“I will take it as a down payment.”

He would receive money and the Rosario.

Big Mama laughed pleasantly.

“Ohoho! As expected, my eyes regarding people aren’t wrong. You will definitely be a big shot.”

“Thank you. Anyway... So what will it be?”

“... Rosario and 100 million.”

“Wah, you will give me Rosario and 100 million? Big Mama is incredible.”

“Well, I am also a storekeeper.”

Tae-hyuk laughed.

This was a satisfactory deal. In fact, the price he had in mind was around 50 million won.

The Trail of the Sunset didn’t even exist in this world. But in the future, his fake would become the new genuine product.

A fake becoming real. It was the final gateway to mastering the Forgery skill.

“Then, will you make the deal?”

“Well. No matter how I think about it, I am losing profit. I will be satisfied with this.”

“Hahah... Is Big Mama really damaged by this?”

All of a sudden, Big Mama dragged Tae-hyuk into an embrace. A rich fragrance wafted out from her body as it became dark.

“Didn’t you fall in love with me at first glance? Let me answer you.”

“Oof! Ooof!”

Big Mama hugged Tae-hyuk harder. Tae-hyuk struggled for breath as his face was buried in her chest.

It was a happy moment.

“This little guy! You are still 10 years too early!”

Big Mama finally freed Tae-hyuk, who was gasping for air.

“... Pant pant. I thought I was going to die.”

His face was completely red.

“Then wait a few days for the money. I will give Rosario to you straight away.”



“... By the way, Big Mama. Can I ask one thing?”

“What?”

“The quote for the painting was clearly two billion. 10% of that is 200 million. Perhaps... Is the hug you gave worth 100 million?”

“Omo. It isn't that cheap. Don't you think this is enough? Didn't you even touch my chest?”

“...O-Okay.”

Tae-hyuk was at a loss for words. Indeed, she was a scary woman.

Big Mama pulled out Rosario from a deep place and gave it to Tae-hyuk.

“So, this is the down payment.”

“I will receive it well.”

“Then, I will prepare the money.”

“Yes.”

The deal was established.

The fake Trail of the Sunset became authentic.

A message flashed on the Demon Revealing Mirror.

[Crime Skill: Forgery has been acquired.]

-You can create one item after the analysis has finished.

-The quality of the finished object depends on your dexterity stat.

-You are able to devote your mind to the artwork under the influence of the skill.

He finally got Forgery!

The temporary skills window was now free. He could get a new skill.

‘X-ray Vision! Something like X-ray Vision. X-ray Vision.’

Tae-hyuk grinned.

“I will be back in a few days, so I will be going now.”

“Wait a minute.”

Big Mama stopped Tae-hyuk from leaving. Then she told him one thing.

“I guess the hug isn’t enough. There is a man who is after you.”

“... After me?’

“Yes. I have a picture.”

“I am grateful.”

She didn’t just describe the person, but showed him a picture.

“Here.”

Big Mama extended a small picture.

Tae-hyuk’s face stiffened the moment he saw it.

“Do you know this person?”

“... I know.”

A man in his early 40s was drawn.

Tae-hyuk never forgot that face. It was natural.

His name was ‘Park Jung-hwan.’ Tae-hyuk was sentenced to death because he was accused of killing him.

‘... Crazy. Why is Park Jung-hwan going after me? What the hell is this?!’

He didn’t express it because Big Mama was watching.

However, Tae-hyuk was inwardly screaming.

The smell of a conspiracy.

“Then, I will go now.”

“If you ever need a background check, then please ask Mama. Of course, it isn’t for free.”

Maybe this wouldn’t be the end of his relationship with Big Mama.

It was his hunch.

---

Tae-hyuk returned home and gave Rosario to his sister.

“....T-Tae-hyuk. How did you get this?”

“Noona. I am Seo Tae-hyuk. Noona’s little brother, Seo Tae-hyuk. Haha, that is a joke. Kang-suk hyung helped me.”

“I-I see. Kang-suk?”

At that moment, he heard Kang-suk’s score rising in Ha-ran’s mind.

‘Speaking of Kang-suk hyung. He seems busy these days. Did something happen?’

“Tae-hyuk!”

Ha-ran suddenly hugged Tae-hyuk.

‘Ugh. Isn’t today the second time that I ran out of air?’

Park Jung-hwan had been hiding in seclusion since a few years ago. But what the heck was he doing now? Was he not just a simple murder victim?

Tae-hyuk’s head was filled with such thoughts.

“Oof! Oof!”

“Noona is worried about you every day. However, it is good to work hard. Promise me you’ll take care of yourself.”

“...Yes.”

Tae-hyuk’s eyes reddened after hearing that Ha-ran was worried about him.

Ha-ran held Rosario in her hand and said.

“The most important thing that Mother left isn’t this Rosario.”

Then she hugged Tae-hyuk even tighter.

“It is you and Tae-min.”

# Chapter 30 – Ill-Fated Relationship From A Past Life

---

Seo Tae-hyuk was back!

The news of the two notorious people, who were disciplined due to the cheating incident, heated up the school.

Tae-hyuk had received a one month suspension, while Park Sung-kwang dropped out of school as a result of the suspension. Tae-yuk's one month suspension was now over.

The school was noisy as the students spread the story.

“In fact, did you know that Seo Tae-hyuk was caught in Park Sung-kwang's evil plots?”

“Ack! That is scary. How can I even go to school tomorrow...?”

“No, you are both wrong. Isn't that statement more believable when applied to the gangster Seo Tae-hyuk?”

“Ah, perhaps. I heard that he had an offer to join an organization after graduating...”

“A-A gangster?”

The rumours snowballed into something bigger and inconceivable.

The main party involved, Tae-hyuk, was in the library and not in the classroom. Tae-hyuk was impressed by An Eun-young's effort.

“Eun-young, really, thank you.”

Dark circles could be seen behind An Eun-young's thick glasses. She had obviously spent the night trying to make this happen.

“I-It is nothing much... It is nothing.”

“No. I wouldn't have been able to do this well without you.”

Tae-hyuk now had 47 intelligence points, the result of focusing solely on studying after he regained Rosario from Big Mama. No matter how hard he had tried, it could still be said that this really was a period of rapid growth.

What would have happened if he hadn't met An Eun-young?

His intelligence had climbed even faster than it had in the beginning.

The retest was in two hours. In the meantime, he had to memorize many things in preparation of the test.



‘In my most recent test, I had an average of 90 points. If I memorize all of the things that Class President brought up then...’

It might really be possible to get close to the first ranked in the school.

“... T-then. This is the last study session. Try your best! Fighting!”

An Eun-young cheered with a raised fist.

At that moment, she looked so cute that Tae-hyuk felt his heart pounding.

“Hmm hmm. Yes. Isn’t it somewhat unsatisfactory that this is the last time? Then, please look after me well, Class President.”

An Eun-young pouted.

“C-Call me Eun-young.”

Tae-hyuk looked at her with a bemused expression.

“Oh, okay... E-Eun-young. Is this it?”

“Yes. Thank you. Then, let’s get started.”

The student sessions of Seo Tae-hyuk and An Eun-young were ending.

---

“Seo Tae-hyuk. Did you study a lot?”

The student supervisor asked with a strangely irritated tone. It seemed that he didn't like the fact that Park Sung-kwang dropped out while a problematic person remained. He got a bribe from Park Sung-kwang's parents based on his graduation results. One of his precious money sources had disappeared because of a gangster.

Therefore, there was hatred in the student advisor's eyes as he watched Tae-hyuk.

“I am a little busy. Just do it as usual.”

“Cocky brat... Teacher Jung believes in you, but I am different. Frankly, it was hard to believe that you got that grade legitimately, so this retest is to make things certain. Do you have any objections?”

“If there are any doubts, then it has to become certain.”

“Ah, right. You haven't received any lessons for a month. The test range is the same as the last test. I told the teachers to pay special attention, so I think this will be a very interesting test.”

Inside the classroom, there was only the student advisor and Seo Tae-hyuk.

“I have decided to supervise all of your tests today. Do you know what will happen if I see your eyes looking around? Well, I don’t think that someone who was first place in the school would do that. Hahahat!”

Tae-hyuk placed his pens on the desk and prepared for the test.

Then the student advisor approached with gleaming eyes.

“Let me take a look.”

The student advisor confirmed that Tae-hyuk hadn’t hidden any cheat sheets in his desk. In the end, he carefully looked at the pens and clicked his tongue. It was a complete criminal treatment.

“Sheesh. Then, the first one is Korean Language. The time limit is 50 minutes. If you write even one word after the time limit is up, then you will get a zero.”

“Of course. Then I will start.”

Tae-hyuk accepted the test paper with a very relaxed expression.

Rather, it was the student advisor who cared.

He had received a bribe from Park Sung-kwang's parents. It was a moderate sum. However, this fact was already noticed by Seo Tae-hyuk. He wanted to kick Seo Tae-hyuk out of school somehow.

In order to do that, everything hinged on this retest. The student advisor didn't know what method Seo Tae-hyuk would use to raise his grades. However, he wouldn't be able to do anything as long as he was monitored closely.

The student advisor laughed. In fact, this test was much more difficult than the last one. There were many traps, and the problems were completely different from the last test's. If he only got 80 points this time, then the student advisor would be able to transfer him to another school.

Tae-hyuk waited for the test with a bored face, like he didn't know what the student advisor was thinking.

“Then, let's start the test!”

The student advisor announced the start of the test.

Tae-hyuk once again admired An Eun-young's ability after seeing the test paper.

‘Wah. Wasn't Class President right?’

An Eun-young predicted that this test would be a lot harder than the test a month ago.

It was the right answer.

The problems were at least a level greater in difficulty.

‘Ah, don’t I know this problem?’

However, almost all of them were already given out by An Eun-young. It seemed like he knew all of the problems.

‘... As expected from the owner of the Studying skill.’

Tae-hyuk started to solve the problems.

It seemed as if he would be able to get a higher score than he thought.

---

The tests were all finished.

The student advisor sat at his desk with a blank face.

“H-How did you do all of this?”

Skimming through the questions, he could see that most of the answers were correct.

The student advisor screamed.

“T-This test is invalid! Tell me! How the hell did you cheat?”

Tae-hyuk stretched his neck that had grown stiff from sitting around all day. Then he looked at the student advisor and sighed.

“You were looking at me the whole time while I was testing. I didn’t cheat.”

“T-This bastard!”

The agitated student advisor tried to hit Tae-hyuk with the baton that he was holding.

At that time, the firmly closed door opened and Teacher Jung Nam-ho entered.

“Seo Tae-hyuk! You better hope that you did well on the test! I came to score it.”

Teacher Jung Nam-ho greeted Tae-hyuk and then looked at the student advisor.

“Student advisor-nim. You did a really good job. From now on, I will take care of the scoring.”

The student advisor flopped down with a dumbfounded expression.

He repeatedly opened and closed his mouth.

“Wait a minute. Isn’t it unfair with Seo Tae-hyuk in here?”

Tae-hyuk smiled at Jung Nam-ho.

“Then I will go out and wait.”

“Yes!”

He left the classroom and saw An Eun-young waiting with an anxious expression.

She had done everything she could. The only thing left was to wait like this.

“T-Tae-hyuk... The test?”

Tae-hyuk made a ‘V’ sign with his fingers.

“Waaaaahhhhh!”

An Eun-young was as delighted, as if it were the fruits of her own labor.

Jjak!

The two people laughed and high-fived.

---

The results of Seo Tae-hyuk's test were released to the whole school the very next day.

This meant that he attracted everyone's attention.

"T-That is ridiculous...!"

The people who saw Seo Tae-hyuk's results attached to the bulletin board were confused.

He had an average of 92 points, and had moved up to second ranked in the class. He was also seventh ranked in the school.

However, other students didn't realize that Tae-hyuk's test was more difficult than usual due to the student advisor.

Nevertheless, it really was an excellent grade.



The students at the front of the bulletin board left, and Seo Tae-hyuk and An Eun-young approached to check the score.

Tae-hyuk made a surprised expression.

An Eun-young spontaneous asked a question, as if she suddenly had a thought.

“If this test was at the same difficulty as the other one... what rank would you be?”

Tae-hyuk answered confidently.

“First.”

---

There was an uproar once it was announced that Seo Tae-hyuk was really a model student.

“Seo Tae-hyuk really was a good student...”

“Besides, to achieve a rank of seventh in the school...”

“Then Tae-hyuk is good at studying, and his face is also pretty good... Does he not have a girlfriend?”

“Hmm, he is only being friendly with An Eun-young. They aren’t in a relationship.”

“T-Then I can confess? Next year is our third year, so this winter is my last chance at love!”

The girls who stayed in the classroom talked and exclaimed joyfully.

In fact, there were quite a few people attracted to Tae-hyuk’s poor appearance. However, their eyes didn’t dare to actively gaze at him.

It turned out that while his appearance that looked villainous, he was actually good at studying? He was like the protagonist of a romance novel!

As soon as class ended, Seo Tae-hyuk headed home.

An Eun-young remained in the classroom due to her position of class president, and could hear the girls talking.

Seo Tae-hyuk’s evaluation had changed. It was obviously a situation worthy of congratulations.

Then why was she in a bad mood?

An Eun-young remembered the treatment that Tae-hyuk had

received up until yesterday. She was the only one who knew that he wasn't bad at all, unlike the rumours.

However, his test results were good, and this seemed to change his status.

She felt strangely lonely.

In the classroom, the girls were arguing about who was going to first make contact with Seo Tae-hyuk.

It was at that moment that An Eun-young rose from her seat. She walked over to the female students and said loudly.

“Don't be mistaken. Seo Tae-hyuk doesn't have time for a relationship with any of you, as he has decided to go to university with me.

“...?”

“.....!”

Everyone in the room fell silent at An Eun-young's declaration.

It sounded like a declaration of war saying that they shouldn't touch her property.

---

The day that Tae-hyuk received the remaining balance from Big Mama.

Seo Tae-hyuk was dressed in a slightly different style than usual.

Today was the day that he had to go to school, something he hadn't done in a long time. Therefore, Tae-hyuk was still wearing his uniform.

"I have to go into the back alleys so..."

In the end, he decided to buy clothes from a store that mainly sold vintage styles.

He asked the clerk to give him a recommendation and changed in the store. Viewed separately, they weren't strange clothes.

However, Tae-hyuk's eyes shook as he saw his reflection in the mirror. He wore skinny jeans with a black leather jacket. Adding the shoes to the outfit really made him look like a biker.

"W-What the hell is this?"

However, he bought it at such a low price that he couldn't get a refund. In addition, it was style that fit in naturally with the back alleys.

“Uh, Hyung! Are you new?”

A bearded man in his thirties raised a hand in greeting as he passed.

“Ah, yes. I have some business with Mama.”

“Haha, yes. You should work hard when young. Then, do your best.”

The man seemed to mistake Tae-hyuk as a business partner.

Tae-hyuk sighed again.

Currently, he had four crime skills.

In addition, he became a model student with An Eun-young’s help.

Would a new future unfold before him? One that was different from the past?

“There was a time I would think so...”

It was still too early to be relieved, as there were still too many problems that had to be addressed.

‘First of all, Park Jung-hwan.’

He was a politician of the opposing party. The current president was pursuing a chaebol-oriented policy. Park Jung-hwan often showed strong criticism towards this, and received wide support from the younger generation.

Currently, he didn't have the right forces, but three years later, he reappeared like a comet, this time as part of the opposition. He was popular enough to be considered as one of the next presidential election candidates.

However, five years later. He was attacked by someone and found dead.

All of the media paid attention to the person who killed him. The one who killed Park Jung-hwan was a young man in his 20s.

Seo Tae-hyuk.

‘My fingerprints were found at the crime scene. I was seen killing Park Jung-hwan on CCTV. There were also five more witnesses. Additionally, once Park Jung-hwan's murder weapon was found... Of course, there were only my fingerprints on it.’

Park Jung-hwan was a representative of the anti-chaebol union, and a hero for the people in their 20s and 30s. There were many people without numerous interests invested in the country who hated him.

However, it was a regular youth who killed him...

It was a really ironic situation. The entire country erupted.

Tae-hyuk recalled his memories of that time.

# Chapter 31 – Ill-Fated Relationship From A Past Life #2

---

Tae-hyuk was going home after he finished his shift as a security personnel when someone struck him from behind with a metal pipe, rendering him unconscious. When he woke up, he was holding a bloody knife, and a bloody man, who had been stabbed dozens of times with a knife, was lying in front of him.

There was no time to escape before the police came and arrested him. At the time, Seo Tae-hyuk had a blood alcohol level of more than 0.1%. According to a witness's statement, the two were arguing when, all of a sudden, Tae-hyuk pulled out a weapon from somewhere and stabbed him.

Of course, Tae-hyuk didn't have any memory of this. He was trapped in prison with no time to grasp the situation. Everything was done in a quick manner, as if things had been prepared in advance.

For reference, there were two oddities in the case.

Firstly, why had Park Jung-hwan passed by that area without any guards? Secondly, why were five witnesses just watching the fight?

In the early days of Tae-hyuk's trial, some of the media outlets paid attention to these facts. However, it soon devolved into the process of turning Seo Tae-hyuk evil. They only focused on that, and he was treated like a sociopath.



At that time, Tae-hyuk was in prison. The media were unable to meet him and turned the arrow towards his family.

-What type of family could raise a son that would brutally kill someone that way?

-His parents passed away, and was raised by his older sister. Doesn't she feel even a little responsible for this?

-I heard that he was violent since he was a child. Did she happen to be hit by him or something?

---

A ruthless news coverage sprang up against Seo Tae-min and Seo Ha-ran.

It became known to the public that both of them were Seo Tae-hyuk's family members. Why did Seo Ha-ran and Seo Tae-min receive such treatment?

The 'thing' he met before receiving the death penalty said that Seo Ha-ran was fired from her job. However, would that really have been the end of it? What else had happened?

Tae-hyuk felt horrible just imagining it.

“Huu...”

Tae-hyuk took deep breaths to calm himself down.

It hadn't happened yet, and he had to make sure it didn't happen in the future. First of all, he needed information on Park Jung-hwan. In order to do that, Big Mama's cooperation was needed.

Tae-hyuk opened the door to Big Mama's pawn shop and went inside.

“Omo, Tae-hyuk came. Hung ~ those clothes fit you well.”

Big Mama laughed and praised Tae-hyuk's new outfit.

“Hello. I came to receive the rest of the payment.”

“Of course, I have prepared it.”

Big Mama smiled and pulled a box of vitamin drinks out of her safe.

“I feel like it's a crime to give you money in this box. It used to be that money was given an apple box, but this is what everyone is doing these days. One box contains 50 million won.”

“Well, then I'll check it right away.”

Tae-hyuk decided to open the box to check the amount.

Big Mama was a criminal who dealt with information and stolen goods. If she deceived someone regarding money then it would be a blow to her credibility. However, it would be good to make sure.

The box contained 10 bottles of vitamin drinks. It was exactly as written on the outside of the box. Tae-hyuk cried out angrily.

“It is supposed to be Shin Saimdang! Shin Saimdang! Don’t be jealous just because she looks younger than you!” (Shin Saimdang: the first woman to appear on a Korean banknote, the 50,000 won note)

“Ohoho! It’s a joke, a gift. This is the real one.”

Big Mama pulled out two different boxes. This time, it really did contain a lot of money. Tae-hyuk carefully checked if the amount was correct. There were 20 bundles of 100 sheets, making an exact 100 million.

Now it was time to cut to the chase.

“By the way, is Big Mama in the information business?”

“How did you know? In fact, it is a new business that I started. By the way... the name Big Mama doesn’t hold the dignity I’m looking

for. In the future, I might change it to something else.”

“... I can’t think of you as anything but Big Mama.”

“Ahaha. Anyway, what did you want to know? The three sizes of your favourite girl?”

Although he was a bit curious, he wouldn’t spend money just to know such a thing.

“I want to find out everything about Park Jung-hwan.”

“I figured you would ask that. By the way, my information is a bit expensive, so will it be okay?”

Tae-hyuk gazed at the box in front of him without saying anything.

“Pay a deposit of one million first. The investigation period is 10 days, and if I’m successful then pay me another two million.”

“Sorry, I didn’t quite hear that?”

“This time it isn’t a joke.”

“E-Expensive!”

It was more than three times the price of other pieces of information. She was probably trying to take as much as she could because he currently had a lot of money.

Big Mama said with a soft smile.

“Politicians on the front lines have a rating above A grade. Furthermore, he is currently in retirement. This is a reasonable price.”

“Kuheom! Yes, I understand. Instead, please make sure that the information is accurate.”

“I will zoom in so close that I will know if he holds on to his buddy with his left hand or right hand when he pees.”

While Tae-hyuk didn't want to know anything like that, he didn't want to miss any little clues.

“Then we have a deal.”

“Thank you for using my services.”

Big Mama called out to Tae-hyuk as he was leaving.

“Oh, right. Tell me if you ever want to come back to work. You are always welcome.”

“How much will you pay me?”

“Hmm, 6,500 won an hour?”

Tae-hyuk laughed bitterly.

It was a little better than the minimum wage, but there were many things that he wanted to learn from her.

‘Anyway, I have no choice but to wait.’

He would use Big Mama’s power as much as possible.

For Tae-hyuk, who only had four skills, this was the best way.

---

Tae-hyuk handed his report card to Ha-ran with a serious expression. He was second in the class, and seventh in the school.

Ha-ran asked after seeing it.

“Is this Tae-min’s?”

“No, it’s mine.”

Ha-ran started to scrutinize his report card with a confused

expression.

She screamed.

Seo Tae-hyuk's name was definitely written on it.

“Omo! Omo!”

Ha-ran reflexively stroked Tae-hyuk's head and said.

“What did Noona say? I knew you could do it! Really well done!”

Ha-ran's amazement didn't end there.

“By the way, Noona. I have one thing to ask so please answer with the truth.”

“H-huh?”

“Noona isn't stupid. In fact, aren't you good at studying? It is enough to go to the university that you wanted.”

“.....”

“I saw the acceptance letter that Noona hid during the voice phishing case.”

“T-That, I was just lucky...”

“No. Just tell me the truth. Noona had to give up on your dream because of Tae-min and me.”

“... Yes. Sorry.”

“Why are you sorry Noona? I’m the one who should be saying sorry!”

“Tae-hyuk doesn’t need to be sorry! I just did what I needed to do... So... Waaaah!”

Ha-ran suddenly started to cry.

Tae-hyuk gently stroked his sister’s back and gave her some tissue.

“Well, you did what you had to do, Noona. Please stop working at the factory now and prepare your luck. And... let’s take the university entrance exam together next year.”

Ha-ran gazed at Tae-hyuk with red eyes.

“... Huh? T-The living expenses...”



“I will do it somehow. The school registration fees as well.”

“T-That will cost a lot of money...”

The living expenses for a family of three and the school admission fees. If he included the university tuition, it was a lot of money.

“I have a lot of money right now.”

“Haven’t you spent all the bounty money?”

In fact, he had saved quite a bit of that money.

He felt remorse for a moment, but that wasn’t what mattered right now.

“Not long ago, I met with the vice president of the Jinsung Group in private. He took me around his house, and in his house, there was a painting that I liked so much that he gave it to me as a gift. In fact, it was actually a very expensive painting.”

“R-Receiving such an expensive gift! Give it back right now!”

“Well. In fact...”

Tae-hyuk showed her the box filled with money.

“I’ve already sold it.”

“.....”

Ha-ran held a hand to her head, as if she was dizzy.

The box was filled with 50,000 won bills. The total seemed to be in the tens of millions. It was the first time she had seen such a large amount of money.

“Isn’t this enough to live for a few years?”

Ha-ran said quietly.

“Go now and return the money.”

Tae-hyuk was at a loss for words. He knew that Ha-ran was overflowing with goodness but he hadn’t expected this.

Should he have thought of another excuse? Something like a passerby saving him. They gave him the lotto number or something like that.

But the water had already been spilled.

“Well, 50 million won may be a big amount of money for us, but

is it really such a big deal for those who already have a lot of money? Thus, he gave me this as a gift. Moreover, I don't think it is polite to return something received as a gift."

In that case, Tae-hyuk would become a villain.

He first had to convince Ha-ran.

Tae-hyuk spoke smoothly.

"When I think about the personality of the person who gave it to me, I think we should use it. Study hard and go to a good university."

"... Certainly, it is rude to return a gift."

"That's right. Can't we use this money? Let's study hard and go to university together."

Tae-hyuk patted Ha-ran's shoulder.

"Well, Noona should put this in your treasure chest. That is the safest place."

"Yes, I understand."

"So, let's go to a private cram school this Saturday. A friend of

mine gave me the information, and she recommended the best cram school.”

“A friend? Is it a man?”

“No, it is a woman.”

“.....”

At that moment, Ha-ran looked at Tae-hyuk with a shocked face. The kid who had followed her around finally grew up.

“Write the resignation letter immediately. From now on, Noona is a student.”

Ha-ran’s expression brightened the moment she heard those words. They were her dream words.

“Uh, yes. I understand. Tae-hyuk... Really, thank you...”

Tae-hyuk sighed with relief. Now, it would really start.

It would be different from his previous life, where everyone was unhappy. Ha-ran and Tae-min too. Everybody would be able to achieve what they wanted. It was his only reward for those who believed in him until the end.

Tae-hyuk muttered under his breath, as if he was making a promise.

“I’m going to slowly change it. The future... no, my destiny!”

---

Everything seemed like a dream to Ha-ran. She was several times happier this time, compared to the time when they had just moved into the new house.

Abandoned... No, she could achieve her dream that she had given up on.

Her brother, who she thought was a troublemaker, had reached the seventh rank in the school, and told her to go to university together.

She was so happy that she couldn’t help but cry.

Besides...

She didn’t have to look at the face of the manager who harassed her anymore. What would he look like when she resigned tomorrow?

She expected that she wouldn’t be able to go to sleep. Ha-ran pinched herself to check if it wasn’t a dream.

“Ah! ...It is real!”

She pulled out the treasure chest and checked the box that Tae-hyuk gave her. There really was 50 million won.

At that moment, Ha-ran became uneasy.

Tae-hyuk said that keeping it here was the safest place. However, a thief entered the house and had taken Rosario just a few days ago. Although it was recovered, the incident had left a big scar on Ha-ran's mentality.

As the head of the family, she had the responsibility to protect everyone, and she couldn't do that. If this money was stolen...

Ha-ran was worried, and prepared countermeasures in her own way.

“Ah, yes! This is it!”

Ha-ran smiled happily.

This money was necessary for her family's dreams and happiness.

She had to protect it somehow. To do that, she was prepared to do anything.

## Chapter 32 – Ill-Fated Relationship From A Past Life #3

---

Lessons were over. Tae-hyuk stayed in the classroom with An Eun-young.

“Give me some recommendations for cram schools.”

An Eun-young was confused by Tae-hyuk’s question.

“Cram schools?”

“Noona got a job straight after high school, and this time she wants to sit the university entrance exam again.”

There was less than a month until this year’s university entrance exam, so it was impossible to start preparing for it now.

“When are you going to take the exam?”

“Next year.”

“What university is she aiming for? What is its current rating? Liberal arts? Science?”

An Eun-young’s specialty came out as she started firing off specific questions. Tae-hyuk scratched his head and replied to the

questions that he knew the answer to.

“I don’t care as long as it isn’t expensive. She hasn’t studied for several years, so I want her to learn from the basics.

“Yes...”

An Eun-young looked at various cram schools with her phone and checked them thoroughly. In the end, she showed him the homepage of the best place.

“Then this one should be the best. The teachers are okay and the pass rate is also the highest.”

“I see.”

Tae-hyuk checked how much the school expenses were.

700,000 won a month. Including food expenses and transportation costs, it would be one million a month. There was one year left, so Ha-ran’s tuition fee would be 12 million won. However, this wasn’t the end.

“The costs of the textbooks and special lectures... It all costs almost two million.”

It was more than 25 million won combined for both of them.



An Eun-young spoke while Tae-hyuk was looking at the school expenses page.

“I-I looked for the cheapest place possible. The boarding cram schools are three million won a month.”

Tae-hyuk sighed.

This was a world of money.

‘I wish I had a surplus of funds... Are there any more bounties?’

Unfortunately, there were no more big jackpots until next year.

Tae-hyuk muttered as if he were making a promise.

“I will cling to all of them.”

An Eun-young made a fighting posture.

“Tae-hyuk, you can do it!”

“Yes. The three of us should pass next year.”

“Uh, yes... T-three...”

An Eun-young looked strangely disappointed.

“In addition, there are the interviews and essays... It isn't just the exam?”

“T-That...”

An Eun-young lecture on university admissions began and Tae-hyuk wrote everything down in his notebook. This would be useful to Tae-min, who would sit his university entrance exam in a few years.

Brr!

All of a sudden, there was a vibration from his pocket.

‘Did my stats rise or something?’

Tae-hyuk pulled out the Demon Revealing Mirror, showing nothing on the screen.

An Eun-young giggled from where she was watching.

“You mistook your phone with the mirror.”

“Ah, phone...”

He forgot, because most of his notifications came from the Demon Revealing Mirror. Tae-hyuk pulled out the phone from deep within his pocket and checked the contents of the notification. It was a text message from someone.

-Tae-hyuk I

The message cut off there. He checked and saw that it came from Seo Ha-ran's phone.

"Eun-young, I'm sorry but I have to leave early. I have an urgent matter so I'll be going first.

"H-huh?"

Tae-hyuk grabbed the jacket hanging on his chair and ran out. The contents of the message had been omitted, but he could tell.

'Something big has happened!'

The situation was so urgent that she couldn't even send a message properly.

Tae-hyuk called a taxi in order to get home even one minute faster.

'Noona, please be safe...'

Tae-hyuk worried as he rode in the taxi.

‘Why isn’t Kang-suk hyung picking up his phone?!’

He must be in a meeting where he needed to turn it off. It had been a while since Tae-hyuk saw Kang-suk’s face.

Tae-hyuk made a strong fist. He couldn’t expect any help from Kang-suk, so he had to get through this with his own strength.

This was the second time that something unforeseen had happened. Knowing the future wasn’t enough, as taking different actions produced different results.

After the Rosario incident, Tae-hyuk had searched for related books in the library. He learnt of the phenomenon called the ‘Time Leap’. The Time Leap said that he didn’t return to the past with his memories. Instead, an infinite number of parallel worlds existed, and he obtained the memories of one of those worlds.

Of course, it was just a hypothesis, albeit a convincing one. The book was thick enough to be used as a pillow, but he came to one conclusion. The future wasn’t fixed, it was constantly changing. Someday, Tae-hyuk’s future knowledge would lose its power. Before that, he needed to learn as many crime skills as possible, since it was his second weapon.

‘Pull yourself together Tae-hyuk. You are walking a tightrope right now.’

Tae-hyuk arrived at the road near his house and handed the driver a 10,000 won bill. There was no time to get the change.

‘Please make it in time!’

Tae-hyuk jumped out and ran home.

Fortunately, his sister was at home; however, she wasn’t alone.

“Seo Ha-ran ~ You didn’t pay back our money, and yet you moved to such a good place?”

“.....”

A large number of men were surrounding Ha-ran. They were neatly dressed in suits, but the atmosphere was terrifying.

“If you borrowed money from us, then you should pay it back! Isn’t that right? Kids.”

“That’s right, Hyung-nim!”

The man called ‘Hyung-nim’ seemed to be in his mid-30s. Every time he laughed, a gold tooth quickly flashed as it reflected the bright sunlight.

The leader of the group extended a hand as he noticed Tae-hyuk entering.

“Aigoo. Who is this? Seo Tae-min?”

“It is Tae-hyuk, Hyung-nim.”

“Uh, yes. Tae-hyuk! Come come. The head of the house has come, so let’s talk business.”

Tae-hyuk suppressed his anger and spoke.

“What are you doing in someone else’s house? I’ll call the police.”

They knew his name.

Creditors?

Based on Tae-hyuk’s memories, they never came to his house.

“Aigoo! Sir! We aren’t bad people. It’s just us. We work with unions and are following all of the laws. Do you want to see our business card?”

The man pulled a business card from his wallet.

“... SY Capital. You are Han Sang-won.”

“That’s right. We have come to receive the debt, all according to legitimate procedures.”

Tae-hyuk stared at Ha-ran, who was shaking with a pale face, from amongst the men. She was biting her lips so hard that blood started to emerge.

This was a legitimate procedure? More than 10 men surrounding a woman was legitimate? Tae-hyuk looked at the baseball bats and iron pipes placed neatly in the corner as threats. The group didn’t carry them, but they were willing to use it at any time.

Tae-hyuk said towards Ha-ran.

“Noona, don’t worry. I won’t let even one of them touch you.”

“Aigoo ~ Sir! You have a strange misconception. We just came to reclaim the debt! Is there any need to touch her if we receive the money?”

“... What type of debt are you here to take?”

“There is a guarantor debt in Seo Ha-ran’s name... with the interest, it is approximately 300 million.”

“There was a clear exemption.”

Their parents had passed away in an accident, leaving behind a huge debt. They were able to solve it by giving up the inheritance. The problem was that the debt was in Ha-ran's name. She couldn't do it, so the last resort was applying for personal bankruptcy. It was a debt that their family had barely escaped from.

Why had it shown up again?

Han Sang-won extended an envelope.

“This...”

“Read it. This is an order of payment from the courts.”

Tae-hyuk examined the documents. Han Sang-won's words were real. Han Sang-won smiled at him.

“Even if there was an exemption, if a claim is made, then the debt will become valid again.”

At that moment, Tae-hyuk realized what Han Sang-won was doing.

It was a type of illegal collection act that indiscriminately purchased dead debts at a cheap price and used lawsuits to activate them again. If the person couldn't pay, then they would have to register for bankruptcy. Of course, there were no prohibitions or penalties, as it was a legitimate business. If someone was hit by this, then they would become a slave, paying off the debt for life



due to the huge interest.

Han Sang-won waved Ha-ran's bankbook.

“At any rate, I had forgotten about it. Then not long ago, you bought this house, so I hurried to file a lawsuit to get an order of payment.”

The house...?

Tae-hyuk instantly realized why this had happened.

‘They found out about the house and came sniffing around...’

Creditors could view the property details of those who owed them money. In the end, money brought the hyenas around.

Tae-hyuk bit his lip and glanced at Ha-ran. Her face looked like she would burst into tears at any moment. However, her desire to protect the money at all costs was seen in her eyes.

“At any rate, tell me your password and nobody will get hurt. Yes? How long has it been? I couldn't even eat lunch. The account name is Cho Kang-suk? I didn't expect you to keep this money in a bank account under someone else's name. Do you want to be kicked out of the house in this cold winter? First of all, I'll just take this money. I am a very merciful person. Haha!”

‘Cho Kang-suk?’

Ha-ran had deposited money into a bankbook in Kang-suk’s name. It was her own idea. If they found the cash, then they would have just taken it. However it was harder with a bankbook that had a password.

Wooduk!

Tae-hyuk grinded his teeth together.

These guys hadn’t just come. They had been here for at least half a day. Han Sang-won had the bankbook and seal in his hands, which were clearly taken from Ha-ran. However, she didn’t tell them the password until the end.

They didn’t touch Ha-ran directly. However, Ha-ran’s expression made it obvious that they had threatened her. How had she felt when she was surrounded by 10 men?

Ha-ran had bravely fought alone. In order to protect the precious money necessary for the family’s dreams...

Tae-hyuk wanted to kill these people right now. But first, he had to secure Ha-ran’s safety.

“... The password is Public Employment.”

“Hahaha! As expected from a friend! Hey kids, let’s go. Pack up your tools.”

The henchmen chuckled and started to pick up the equipment they brought.

“Sir! We have just received 50 million won! Although, don’t you know that there is still 250 million won left? See you next time. Hahahaha!”

Han Sang-won and his henchmen were gone in an instant.

Ha-ran’s shoulders shook.

“T-Tae-hyuk... S-sorry.. Noona is a fool... Huaaang!”

In the end, Ha-ran burst into tears. They were the desperate tears that she had tried to keep from falling.

Tae-hyuk bit his lip.

“... I will make them pay for every tear that fell from Noona’s eyes.”

Tae-hyuk gazed coldly at Han Sang-won’s business card.

‘SY Capital...!’

Seo Ha-ran had fought against them to the end.

Now it was Tae-hyuk's turn to fight.

“Noona. Don't worry. I'll get it back tenfold.”

Tae-hyuk stood up.

He would put everything he had into destroying them.

## Chapter 33 – Ill-Fated Relationship From A Past Life #4

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Tae-hyuk was holding a piece of paper in his hand with information on SY Capital written on it.

“It is five million won per sheet...”

Tae-hyuk had asked Big Mama to find out information on SY Capital. Exactly one day later, he knew everything about them.

First of all, their outward appearance was of a prosperous company that was officially registered as a business. It was a place where blue-chip companies listened to advice about taxes. However, that was just its outward appearance.

Behind them was an organization of gangsters who did all types of dirty work. Illegal debt collection. Gambling. Drug sales. There were also rumours of long-term smuggling.

Tae-hyuk bit his lip.

There was a politician behind them so the police were unable to do anything. Tae-hyuk saw the name of the politician and laughed.

“It is literally an ill-fated relationship from a past life.”

With his skills alone, he wouldn't be able to fight SY Capital.

Therefore, he came up with an idea.

“If I can’t fight with my skills that I have right now, then I need to learn new skills.”

Tae-hyuk knew most of the mechanisms to learn skills. If the opponent had a crime skill, then he would learn it. Then, it had to be perfectly used against the original owner.

The title [God of Crime] gave him this ability. Until now, he had taken advantage of it after acquiring the skills. This time, however, he would be able to predict what type of skills he would get in advance.

Tae-hyuk’s gaze was fixed at one point on the report. It was about an illegal casino secretly operated by SY Capital.

‘One billion won a day. Isn’t that quite big?’

There were five dishonest gamblers in charge of it. The main events were Go-Stop, Go, Seven Card Stud Poker, Texas Hold’em...

‘The events mainly consists of playing cards.’

This casino was different from the other casinos that were more focused on oriental games, making it a well known casino for those visiting from Russia or North America. Thus, foreigners chose events where they knew the rules.

‘There are kids who play internationally.’

The minimum bet amount was one million, and if people kept raising that amount by several times, then tens of millions of won would appear on the table.

Tae-hyuk was a perfectly normal high school student who had never tried playing cards.

Gambling was something that he had done with his roommates in prison. The bets were special foods that came with that day's diet.

Tae-hyuk ground his teeth together as he remembered that time.

“Those damn cheating scum...”

It was normal for a full house and a straight flush to come out often. Tae-hyuk only got two pairs, and was deceived every day. Later, he learned that they were the nation's top dishonest gamblers who used their skills to get things like chocolate and drinks. Those days had been full of suffering. But now he had the crime skills!

Tae-hyuk muttered quietly.

“Then this time, will I get the Gambling skill?”

The goal was set. Now it was time for the preparations.

---

Tae-hyuk sipped a lukewarm hot chocolate as he waited for someone in a cafe. It was late in the afternoon, so there were few people inside.

The door opened and middle-aged man in a trench coat entered. Tae-hyuk got up and waved his hand.

“Hello. Detective Park Jung-bae?”

Park Jung-bae was a man with an impressive beard.

“Uh, are you Seo Tae-hyuk?”

Park Jung-bae sat in front of Tae-hyuk and ordered a glass of cold water.

“I can’t afford a cup of coffee that costs 5,000 won.”

He said while wiping his face with a wet towel.

“Did you hear the story from Big Mama?”



“Ah, Mama? I heard it! So, what can I do to help?”

“I am thinking of eating up the gambling place operated by SY Capital, and I want Detective-nim to watch from the sidelines.”

“Hahaha! Eat up SY? You don’t seem to be a dishonest gambler.”

“Just wait and see.”

Park Jung-bae’s eyes flashed. Every time he laughed, a strong smell flowed out from his mouth.

“You know that I have a line with SY Capital?”

“Of course.”

Park Jung-bae was a corrupt police officer, and took care of several problems for criminal organizations in exchange for money.

He was the complete opposite of Kang-suk. If Tae-hyuk wanted to team up with the police, then he would work with Kang-suk. However, Kang-suk had been working overtime lately due to a recent case.

In the end, he was forced to find another police officer through Big Mama.

‘Besides, I don’t want Kang-suk hyung to commit a crime. It is better off like this.’

Kang-suk had to be Ha-ran and Tae-min’s protector until the end.

Park Jung-bae drank the cold water and said.

“So how much money can you give me?”

“That...”

Park Jung-bae chuckled with a satisfied face at Tae-hyuk’s answer.

“Kuahaha! Yes. You are a person being nurtured. That should be enough!”

“The operation is in three days at the SY casino.”

---

It was the day of the fight.

After finishing all of their preparations, Seo Tae-hyuk and Park Jung-bae headed out to the casino operated by SY Capital.

‘Oh, isn’t this a hotel?’

Park Jung-bae brought Tae-hyuk to the upper lounge suite of a hotel.

This was the destination.

The following scene was the first image he thought of when he heard that it was an illegal casino. There were fluorescent lights, boxes filled with money, and even bottles rolling around on the ground. Opening the door caused cigarette smoke to billow out, revealing many men with scars across their faces.

In reality, however, it looked just like any other casino.

Tae-hyuk clicked his tongue.

‘Isn’t this a place where I should be wearing a suit?’

People in uniform were busy wandering around the corridor.

Tae-hyuk was wearing the leather jacket and skinny jeans that he purchased not long ago. He gave off the feeling of a bad youth.

“Here it is.”

There was a large door guarded by two men in sunglasses.

Park Jung-bae coughed as he stood in front of the door.

The guards deeply bowed.

“Detective-nim, you came!”

“Shit, Don’t call me detective here. Call me Hyung-nim.”

“Yes, Hyung-nim!”

They knew Park Jung-bae, so they opened the door without any fuss.

They passed through the door to the illegal casino.

There were dozens of tables with dealers handing out cards. At first glance, there seemed to be over 50 people spending enormous amounts of money. There were piles of money in front of the people, the total amount that circulated throughout the building amounting to over one billion won.

It was gambling at a colossal scale. Nobody cared about the appearance of new people, as they were too busy concentrating on their own hands.

Tae-hyuk clicked his tongue.

How much of that money was used on bribes?

‘A recipient of those bribes is right beside me.’

Park Jung-bae was one of the police officers who received bribes from SY.

Tae-hyuk saw a familiar face among the dealers.

‘During the day, he does illegal collection. At night, he is a dealer in a casino. He jumps well between jobs.’

It was the person who intimidated Ha-ran.

Han Sang-won saw Park Jung-bae and came running over.

“Uh, Detective Park! I told you not to come here. It is like decreasing the price of baby formula! I said I would contact you through our phones.”

The people nearby murmured the moment they heard the word ‘detective.’

Han Sang-won exclaimed to them.

“Haha, don’t worry. He is someone watching behind us.”

Han Sang-won's words implied that the detective was a dog that he had raised himself. The people started to play the game again like they understood.

“Ah. Chief Han. You don't need to go to so much effort. Today I just came to play for a while.”

“Haha! Detective is too big for this. It is like going to one of the 100 won Go-Stop places in the neighbourhood.”

Park Jung-bae tapped the head of Tae-hyuk who was next to him.

“No, today he will be playing. I came to watch.”

“Hrmm? No, you...”

Han Sang-won noticed the presence of an uninvited guest and looked at Tae-hyuk.

“Chief Han Sang-won. You are busy day and night.”

“Ah! You! Haha! I don't know why you came here. Did you want to win a jackpot to pay off your debt?”

Tae-hyuk laughed and replied.

“I hope to give you that much.”

Han Sang-won laughed at his words. Then he whispered in Tae-hyuk's ears.

“No. This isn't a playground for kids. If you want to find a place for one million~two million won then I will introduce you to some places. Well, you might end up stripped of your organs in the long term... When that happens, feel free to come to SY Capital. Didn't I give you my business card?”

Tae-hyuk quietly opened the box of vitamin drinks that he brought with him. It was filled with 50,000 won bills.

Han Sang-won laughed as he saw it.

“This! You came with some money? Yes. Then please, feel free to jump in.”

Han Sang-won guided Tae-hyuk and Park Jung-bae to a table.

The dealer and a few guests were playing poker.

“Hey. Let him play. He is surprisingly rich.”

“I understand, Hyung-nim!”

Tae-hyuk sat at the table and the dealer started to play the hand.

He took out a set of cards and shuffled them. At that moment, Tae-hyuk noticed that the dealer took something out.

‘From the very beginning?’

The intent of his actions was clear.

It was to let Tae-hyuk win recklessly in the beginning. At first, even if a person got a good hand, they wouldn’t raise such high stakes. That would only happen after winning a few times. After they upped the ante, the dealer would manipulate the draw to suck away all of their money. The evidence of this was that most of the tables were lamenting more than cheering with victory.

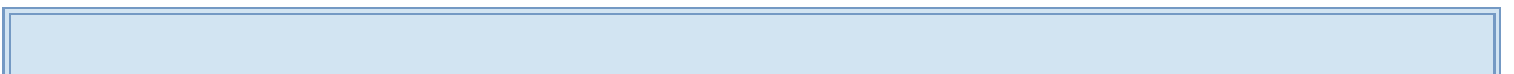
The odds were overwhelmingly high for the dealer’s side. Many of them were professional scammers prepared by SY Capital.

Tae-hyuk realized that this was an illegal casino and was prepared to deal with the cheating dealers.

He received a notification of a new crime skill.

Brr!

‘Good!’





[Crime Skill: Gambling has been learnt.]

-You will become a dishonest gambler.

Tae-hyuk was at a loss as he saw the words on the Demon Revealing Mirror.

‘W-What? This description...’

The contents were simple and easy to understand.

The dealer said.

“Guest-nim. Do you know Seven Card Stud Poker?”

Seven Card Stud Poker was a type of card game played with seven cards.

First, he would receive three cards and would reveal one card. Every time he received an additional card, he would have to make a bet.

Basically, except for the first two cards and the last hidden one, all the cards would be revealed.

Due to this, it was a game filled with various bluffs and

psychological warfare.

“Of course. I bought the book yesterday and studied hard.”

“... Haha, yes.”

The dealer and other guests laughed.

Well, he did have the face of a beginner.

But after a while, he became the king of this casino.

# Chapter 34 – Ill-Fated Relationship From A Past Life #5

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“This is something like a talisman. Can I put it on the table?”

Tae-hyuk pulled out the Demon Revealing Mirror. Now he was ready to play this game.

“A mirror? No, it doesn’t matter.”

“Thank you.”

Tae-hyuk checked his hand, revealing Two aces and a King.

‘They gave me very good cards.’

It was the best beginning, but also the worst one. He now had to reveal one of the three cards that he received.

Seven Card Stud Poker was a game where he couldn’t get a lot of money based on only good cards. Most of the cards were revealed. If an opponent’s hand was overwhelmingly stronger than one’s own hand, then a majority of players would forfeit early. Even if he completed the hand, he wouldn’t be able to get anything out of it but the most basic of bets.

He had to win while raising the stakes as much as possible. That was the way to get a lot of money.

‘If I reveal the King in this situation, then it is like I am telling them that I have a pair of Aces. However, it is even worse to reveal the Ace here.’

The dealer gave this type of hand to check for Tae-hyuk’s ability. In this case, skilled card cheats would boldly reveal the Ace. Tae-hyuk didn’t care about his poker face as he showed the King, receiving his next card.

Once again, it was a King. With the fourth card, his two pairs were completed.

The dealer said,

“Please make a bet.”

“Wow, that is nice. Hehe... I will go half!”

That meant that he would bet half as much as the current bet on the table.

The total amount was huge. There were five bundles of one million won on the table. In the end, Tae-hyuk added another 2.5 million won. If they accepted, then the stakes would increase tremendously.

However, experienced gamblers could completely predict the

hand of their opponent just by looking at the open cards and the bet.

“Aigoo. I am being killed from beginning to end, so I will just forfeit.”

“I will also forfeit.”

“Forfeit.”

With the exception of the dealer, all of the other players forfeited. In that case, Tae-hyuk would only receive the basic betting amount, even if he got a good hand.

The dealer said,

“You have a good hand, congratulations. I am curious about the completion, so I will stay with you until the end. I will bet.”

It was one of the boss’ privileges to ignore half-bets and to only add the base amount of money.

“Give me the next card.”

In the end, Tae-hyuk received an Ace and finished with a full house. Tae-hyuk won seven million won in an instant.

‘There is a trick of losing money to the opponent, and then taking their entire fortune.’

Tae-hyuk had been watching the other players on the table as soon as the hand started.

‘I thought they were just guests, but everyone here is a card cheat. I will receive a triple whammy. Are they trying to make me into a beggar? By the way, the Gambling skill...is amazing!’

The Gambling skill alone had no power, but if he activated the skill along with all his other skills, then he would be optimized for gambling.

He literally became a card cheat.

‘I can see the opponent’s hand with the Spying skill, draw my desired hand with the Robbery skill, and put on a professional poker face with the Voice Modulation skill. In addition, with the Forgery skill, I can manipulate the cards in my hand...’

It would literally be a strange situation if he lost. However, the opponents were also card cheats, and Tae-Hyuk didn’t know the extent of their strengths. He had to remain vigilant.

Tae-hyuk laughed exaggeratedly.

“Ahaha! I was lucky.”

The professional gamblers made dying sounds.

“Aigoo! You are too strong.”

“I have to try not to lose all my money.”

The card cheats were all acting in order to receive money from Tae-hyuk. However, they weren't the only predators here.

Tae-hyuk said,

“Shall we start the next hand?”

With the use of Voice Modulation, Tae-hyuk simulated the voice of an excited, young man.

The game began.

“Half. Is anybody else coming along?”

“Kuoong!”

Tae-hyuk dominated the next four hands at the table. Two full houses and one four of a kind. He also got a straight. The other players couldn't follow through to the end, and most of them had to forfeit.

One cheater signalled to the dealer.

-What? Wasn't he supposed to lose for the first time?

The dealer shook his head desperately, meaning that that he didn't do it. He hadn't subtracted any cards, so it was just pure luck that Tae-hyuk had completed a good hand.

Was it beginner's luck? If they lost any more money, then the situation might become irreversible.

The cheaters eventually decided to use their techniques.

-It can't be helped. Give him a bad hand!

The dealer nodded.

He gave Tae-hyuk a 2, 4 and a 5. Next up was a 6. The opponent would keep calling to the end, hoping for a last chance. In the end, he would become bankrupt due to the incomplete straight.

The cheaters doubled and half raised the ante. Tae-hyuk followed along faithfully.

Finally, the last hidden card remained, with the pot closing up to 100 million. It was impossible to know if Tae-hyuk had completed the straight or not.



A cheater said,

“Hyung, should we eat from the same table as someone who is trying for a straight?”

“Hrmm. I’m sure I didn’t complete the straight. Either way, I will call.”

“T-This bastard...”

A curse emerged from the mouth of a cheater.

Tae-hyuk bluffed against himself. If it wasn’t for the dealer, then the cheaters might have been deceived by his acting. However, all of the cheaters knew Tae-hyuk’s hand. In the end, the straight wasn’t completed.

There wouldn’t even be a single pair, resulting in a garbage hand.

“I also call. Shall I now hand out the hidden card?”

The dealer handed each of the players a card. In the end, Tae-hyuk didn’t forfeit.

The cheaters smiled with satisfaction. The three of them had joined together to trick the beginner. In the end, he would open the hidden card, and realize that his choices were wrong. He would

fall into the swamp of despair.

The dealer said,

“Then everyone is waiting for their hidden.”

One card from above. One card from above. And another from the bottom. The one card from the top again.

The dealer knew the order of all the cards in his deck, and could freely draw out the desired hand. He could give the opponent the hand he wanted. He wore a uniform, but the dealer was a skilled card cheat.

Each player checked their hidden card.

“Please disclose your hands.”

The dealer declared. The players would declare their hand in turn.

One cheater scratched the back of his head and said,

“Ace two pair.”

The one sitting in front of him touched his chin and revealed his hand.

“This guy. Aren’t you unlucky today? I have a triple 3.”

The last cheater shook his head.

“Tsk tsk. It seems like I have won. Straight 7’s.”

Then he moved to grab the money piled on the table.

Seo Tae-hyuk watched the cheaters with an emotionless face and opened his mouth.

“Wait a moment. You still haven’t checked my hand.”

The card cheats looked at Tae-hyuk with absurd expressions.

“Haha, I see. Sorry, Yes. Did you complete the straight?”

Their expressions indicated that it was absolutely impossible.

“I’m sorry about this. No matter what is publicly disclosed, it is impossible to do a straight 6.”

“However, there is still a chance that my hand is a flush.”

Certainly. Two of the four patterns were the same. If the three

hidden cards had the same pattern, then it would be a flush.

“Hahaha! I’m sorry.”

Then the dealer, who had been watching quietly, moved. He showed his hand to everyone.

“A flush of Aces.”

Then cheaters started moaning.

“Kuk! Dealer-nim. This NPC is too strong! In this present situation, that hand is a foul!”

The dealer scratched his head with a sorry expression.

“I’m sorry. I was lucky.”

He was smiling but his eyes were cold. With this, the newcomer would completely lose all of his money. He just needed to lose one or two more times, and he would be completely broke.

“Isn’t gambling really fun?”

“Huh?”

For a moment, the people gathered at the table thought that they

didn't hear Tae-hyuk's words properly.

Wasn't this a situation where all of his money was flying away?

“Sometimes this happens.”

Tae-hyuk slowly revealed his hand. The cheaters who saw it sat down.

The dealers shrieked.

“T-that is ridiculous! How is your hidden card a 3?! I never...!”

Obviously, he had given Tae-hyuk the wrong hand. However, Seo Tae-hyuk had a 3 as his hidden card, and completed the straight 6.

The cheater who finished with the straight 7 shouted.

“T-That doesn't beat my straight! But, what is that expression?”

“Everyone is mistaken. My hand isn't a straight.”

At that moment, Tae-hyuk's atmosphere changed. The mask he was using was broken, and the wicked smile of a cheater appeared.

“The straight is a hand that can evolve one step further. Now, take a closer look at my hand.”

“Aaaaah!”

They hadn't cared about the pattern of the cards because they were worried about the completion of the straight.

The 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 straight cards all had the same pattern. Straight flush!

It broke through the odds of 1/649,740, and had appeared before them.

Tae-hyuk said quietly.

“However, why did you say that it was impossible for a 3 to come out? Do you have a hand injury?”

‘I know what you are doing. but it couldn't stop me.’

Tae-hyuk seemed to be saying to the cheaters.

“This bastard... You are also a card cheat!”

They realized it. The person in front of them wasn't an easy mark. He was a card cheat like themselves. A monster with tremendous skill.

“But I think the [Tee](#) is a little old. There are marks all over it. There should be a duplicate Tee. Shall we use it?”

(Tee= not sure but it seems to be a machine or holder that holds the cards.)

“Ugh. This bastard...”

Tee allowed them to remove a card from the deck. The one on the table was a specially made product. Without this, the dealer couldn't draw out his desired hand. If he rejected Tae-hyuk's request here, then it would be the same as confessing that he was a cheater.

In the end, the Tee was replaced and a new game started.

“I will make you lose.”

The dealer lost the previous battle. The other cheaters started fighting Tae-hyuk with their own techniques in order to defend their final pride.

After exactly five games, they lost their money. Tae-hyuk's money had tripled in an instant.

His total cash stack amounted to 150 million, something he achieved in only two hours.

---

Han Sang-won said,

“Hrmm. Everything was taken?”

Tae-hyuk wasn't playing against ordinary guests, and instead was playing against card cheats hired by SY Capital. If they lost money, then it would become SY's mistake.

Han Sang-won laughed.

He looked at the dealer kowtowing to him with a cold expression. Han Sang-won took off his suit jacket.

“I'm sorry. I thought he was a sucker... He was a card cheat hiding tremendous skills.”

“Well, that might be the case. But you should be prepared to lose one finger.”

“P-Please, just...”

Han Sang-won took out a phone from his pocket and started dialing a number.

“... It's me. Call Kim Shin-hyeong. I have a direct opponent for him.”



Kim Shin-hyeong was the best card cheat that SY had.

He hung up after 10 minutes.

Han Sang-won wiped the bloody knife with a handkerchief. He opened the door to greet Kim Shin-hyeong.

“You wouldn’t call me for an ordinary person. Who is it?”

“Seo Tae-hyuk.”

“It is the first time I’ve heard that name. Is he a card cheat active abroad?”

“No, he’s a high school student.”

“Huh?”

Han Sang-won walked out with Kim Shin-hyeong, stepping around the dealer holding his bloody hand.

## Chapter 35 – Ill-Fated Relationship From A Past Life #6

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Tae-hyuk looked down at the vitamin boxes, which had increased to a total of three boxes. The money that he first brought into the casino was 30 million won, the total amount of money that he had saved up. The total had now increased by five times.

The dealer and the players that he was playing with disappeared after someone called them away.

‘SY lost a lot of money, so it isn’t over yet.’

Han Sang-won’s ability was being able to stretch out the profits. For example, he had led Tae-hyuk to a table with four card cheats, who had been waiting for the appropriate target to appear. If there was a mixture of regular guests, then there wouldn’t be a large amount of profit. He was able to perfectly deceive them because they were card cheats.

A bellboy pushing a drinks cart passed by Tae-hyuk.

“Can I have a drink?”

“Of course, Guest-nim.”

As the lounge of a luxury hotel, it offered free drinks. There was whiskey with ice in it, cocktails made with sweet fruity liqueur,

and Vodka with kahlua.

They were easy and quick drinks. Drinking two glasses would make a person's self-control go away.

Tae-hyuk picked a cherry cocktail without any alcohol in it. He sipped it while watching the other tables before someone walked up behind him.

"Guest-nim, you are better than I thought."

"Ah, if it isn't Han Sang-won. However, where did the people playing the game go? I wanted to play for longer."

Han Sang-won smiled but his fingers were trembling.

"Everybody is busy. Um, I want to introduce you to another table. I don't think there are any more empty seats. If you don't mind, I have made a special place for you. How about it?"

"I don't care who they are today. It doesn't matter."

Han Sang-won asked me again to confirm.

"Where is Detective Park?"

"Well, he became very drunk so I told him to go and rest."

“Is that so? Then let’s go.”

Tae-hyuk didn’t miss Han Sang-won’s mouth going up.

‘The protector is gone, so he can act as he like. But is that really the case?’

Han Sang-won led Tae-hyuk to the manager’s room.

There was a dealer with a bandage around his arm and a man with sharp eyes waiting for him.

“Guest-nim. This is Kim Shin-hyeong. He is someone with some knowledge about how to play poker. I think it will be a good game.”

“Han Sang-won, is this your idea? A one-on-one game is no fun unless the stakes are higher.”

“... Haha. Don’t worry. I will raise the basic bet to three million. Are you satisfied with that?”

It meant that he had no intention of drawing this out for a long time. In fact, Tae-hyuk was the same.

“The more the merrier.”

Han Sang-won gritted his teeth at Tae-hyuk's appearance. He was a man who started at the bottom, and rose through the ranks to the position of manager of the branch office.

However, it was the first time he met a type like Seo Tae-hyuk. At first, he thought it was due to Park Jung-bae. However, that attitude didn't change, even after he had disappeared. What caused such self confidence?

This was their territory. The opponent hadn't realized that he walked into the mouth of a lion. If he just used a little strength, then he could kill this wannabe brat.

Han Sang-won trembled with a strange joy at the thought.

"Then let's get started right away. It seems like the dealer isn't feeling well, so I will deal the hands."

Tae-hyuk greeted Kim Shin-hyeong, who he would be playing a big game with from now on.

"Please take care of me, Ajusshi."

"Play well, child."

Kim Shin-hyeong's eyes were different from the other card cheats that Tae-hyuk had met so far. He seemed to relax after

seeing Tae-hyuk's appearance.

‘He has the eyes of a lion about to catch a rabbit.’

Tae-hyuk licked his lips.

Until now, it was just a simple massacre.

The game right now could be called the beginning of the fight.

The Seven Card Stud Poker game progressed quickly until the third hand. Tae-hyuk smoothly received the cards.

He had three cards in his hand, a pair of 7s and one Ace. In this situation, it was natural to open with the Ace and hide the pair. However he didn't do just that. On the next turn, if he got an Ace and got two pairs, then it would be difficult to raise the pot. Tae-hyuk didn't hesitate to reveal one of the 7s.

His eyes drifted over to Kim Shin-hyeong's hands. The latter had revealed a 2 earlier than Tae-hyuk, so it was likely that he was in the same situation as Tae-hyuk. He was probably holding either an Ace, King, or Queen in his hand, and had only revealed one of the pair of 2s. Tae-hyuk guessed that he was probably aiming for a higher two pair.

Even so, it was too early in the hand to confidently say so. It was almost at the same time that he received the cards. No matter how skilled a card cheat Kim Shin-hyeong was, it wasn't a judgment

that could be made quickly.

Did he have a triple 2? Or, he might be making a bluff.

Tae-hyuk frowned. The opening hand alone could cause a psychological warfare. This was what the top-ranking professional gamblers were all about.

‘Can I accept it as an acknowledgment of my abilities? Then, I am sorry, as I can see all of his cards.’

Tae-hyuk manipulated the Demon Revealing Mirror and used the ‘Spying’ skill. The cards that Kim Shin-hyeong currently had appeared on the mirror.

‘It is also a pair of 2s.’

The hand wasn’t that special, so he was probably trying to make it seem like a triple. Kim Shin-hyeong must have skills if Han Sang-won was so confident in bringing him to the table. Then Kim Shin-hyeong drew two successive 2s and took the victory.

Tae-hyuk’s first defeat.

Color started to return to Han Sang-won’s face. Tae-hyuk wasn’t as good as he thought. Just as he was thinking this,

“Let’s start the next hand.”

After that, Tae-hyuk kept on forfeiting. That's how overwhelming Kim Shin-hyeong's hands were. It was like his clothes were becoming wet with rain.

In no time, 50 million won of Tae-hyuk's money had disappeared. The power of the default three million won bet was bigger than he thought.

Han Sang-won's expression kept getting brighter and brighter. Now, the only thing left was to take away everything Tae-hyuk had left.

He quietly issued new instructions to Kim Shin-hyeong.

Tae-hyuk looked at the cards in his hand. A triple Ace had come on the fourth turn.

Compared to that, Kim Shin-hyeong just had random cards. It seemed like the best he could get was a pair.

‘It is a trick to make me think that I have good luck.’

Tae-hyuk grasped Han Sang-won's plan at a glance. This could determine victory. Tae-hyuk couldn't avoid the game.

“I will go half.”



“Uh huh. This kid is good. Still, I’m pretty tough. I will take it on. Call.”

The stakes on the table had become 30 million won.

On the sixth card, Tae-hyuk received another Ace and completed the four of a kind. Tae-hyuk had two Aces in front of him. It was a hand that he could bet all of his possessions on.

Kim Shin-hyeong had a 3, 10 and 4 exposed. Because the pattern of the 3 and 4 were the same, there was the possibility of a straight flush. However, for that to happen, all his hidden cards had to be a hit.

The probably was like winning the lotto. In a situation where only the last hidden card remained, Tae-hyuk confirmed his hand through Spying.

‘The 5 and 6 of spades... It is also a straight flush.’

However, the hidden card had to be a 2 or 7 of spades.

Kim Shin-hyeong said.

“In fact, I still haven’t completed my hand. Based on the showing cards though, you should have at least a triple. I will bet everything on the last hidden card and declare all-in.”

He declared all-in before receiving the hidden card. If Tae-hyuk accepted it, then the two people's hands would be revealed and the hidden cards drawn.

Tae-hyuk bet 150 million won. With the 150 million won that Han Sang-won had prepared, the pot added up to a total of 300 million won. If he died here, then he would lose 30 million won. However, if he accepted then he would win 300 million won and would be a big winner.

Obviously, Tae-hyuk was in a favourable situation. Tae-hyuk already had four of a kind. On the other hand, Kim Shin-hyeong had to draw one of two cards to complete his hand.

Tae-hyuk immediately answered like it was a no-brainer.

“Call.”

“Hahahaha! Your face hasn't changed despite possibly winning 300 million. It really is amazing. You have guts. I will pull out the last hidden card.”

Tae-hyuk said.

“Wait a minute. I don't know what type of trick you might use, so put the card on the table. I will check the card first.”

Kim Shin-hyeong declared.

“It doesn’t matter.”

Han Sang-won chuckled from where he was watching.

“Hahaha! Guest-nim! Surely you don’t think there will be a trick at the end? I heard that Guest-nim also enjoys tricks. Won’t you win even if you don’t use it? Uhahahahaha! Let’s see what will happen!”

In the end, their two hands were revealed. Kim Shin-hyeong had an unfinished hand, and needed to pull out a 2 or 7 of spades. Meanwhile, Tae-hyuk already had the Ace card that completed his hand.

Tae-hyuk pulled a card to stop any cheating and laid it out on the table. Kim Shin-hyeong then pulled out the next one on top and turned it over.

It was a 7 of spades! Kim Shin-hyeong completed the straight flush.

Han Sang-won started to laugh as he saw it.

“Bravo! As expected of Kim Shin-hyeong! Truly great to watch! Guest-nim, I’m truly sorry. This game seems to be our victory!”

Han Sang-won tried to gather the 300 million won that was piled

on the table.

However, Tae-hyuk reached out and obstructed his actions.

“What? It’s surely over. What is this? Do you want to do this? Try it, you fucker!”

“No. I haven’t drawn my hidden card yet. The game isn’t over.”

“Kuhahahaha! What is this? Guest-nim! Your hand is a four of a kind! Four, of, a, kind! It has already been completed! Are you trying to draw a card to make a royal straight flush or something?”

“That still remains to be seen, so I’ll pull a card anyway.”

“Just try it! Even you can’t win, unless you are a god!”

Tae-hyuk said.

“A god. The god of gambling. I have something similar. Then I will choose my hidden card.”

Tae-hyuk pulled out a card and turned it over.

Then, he said.

“That reminds me, poker only uses 52 out of the 54 cards right?

The two remaining ones are pitiful, so I mixed them in.”

He pulled out a card from his sleeve.

“.....”

Tae-hyuk had chosen the joker card. It was a card with the potential to be anything.

“I will turn the joker into an ace. My hand will now have five aces, becoming the strongest hand. I think it is my victory.”

“T-This bastard! Playing a prank...!”

Han Sang-won cried out with agitation.

“Don’t think you can play around like this! Everybody, come in and pull out this crazy brat!”

Tae-hyuk shrugged.

Then he said.

“In fact, I already knew. It wouldn’t even matter if I won 300 million, or even three billion. Han Sang-won wouldn’t ever give me that money.”

“Of course! You are crazy if you think I will give money to you! Fuck. Do you have eyes? Are you looking down on me? I will throw you into the ocean today. Shit! What are they doing? Come in and drag this kid out!”

However, no one replied to his calls.

“There is one thing. I definitely came with Detective Park Jung-bae, but what is he doing right now?”

“... He went to rest after becoming drunk... Wait a minute. Perhaps...!”

Tae-hyuk laughed.

“You were so focused on the game that you didn’t even hear the fuss outside.”

“.....”

“It seems that I should be the one say checkmate.”

## Chapter 36 – Ill-Fated Relationship From A Past Life #7

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Park Jung-bae did better than Tae-hyuk initially thought.

Tae-hyuk's purpose wasn't simply to win a large sum from gambling. Even if he won now, the threat of a predator wouldn't disappear, as long as SY existed. SY might strike again to take away something else that was precious.

In the end, he had to win the war, and not just the battle. To get rid of the predator, it was necessary to pull out its teeth and claws in order to weaken them. In the case of SY, their money represented those teeth and those claws.

‘Destroy the illegal casino system itself.’

According to Big Mama's information, most of SY's operating funds were supplied from this casino. If it disappeared, then the organization would naturally die out in suit. It was the best way to get rid of the ghost from a previous life.

In order to do that, Park Jung-bae's cooperation was essential. Tae-hyuk had promised him 50% of the profits earned from today's events.

Han Sang-won murmured in a trembling voice.

“W-What is going on...?”

As if to answer his question, the door to the manager’s room opened. A person in a suit burst in and shouted in an urgent voice.

“S-S-Sang-won hyung-nim. I-It is serious!”

“I told you to call me chief! Where is that bastard Park Jung-bae?”

“T-that...”

“What about it?”

“Hyung-nim should run away! The police are out there!”

Han Sang-won’s face distorted in an instant.

“Son of a bitch! How much have I paid him in the up to now...?!”

Tae-hyuk started to take the money piled up on the table while Han Sang-won was distracted by the sudden appearance of the police.

It was 300 million in total. It was already lucky that he previously gained 50 million won. If not, he would have needed to mobilize 007 bags to move it.



He started out with 30 million won, and it had literally multiplied by around 10 times its original amount.

‘The professional gambler fled, and has probably been arrested by the police officers guarding the exit.’

Kim Shin-hyeong could no longer be seen. His wits were incredible, since he gambled for a living.

“Seo, Tae, Hyuk!”

Han Sang-won glared at Tae-hyuk.

Tae-hyuk replied with a sudden expression of remorse.

“Ah, Chief. Doesn’t Noona still owe you 250 million won?”

Tae-hyuk extended the money to Han Sang-won. Once the police came in, the money would be no different from toilet paper. He acted like this while knowing that fact.

“Kuock! T-This bastard!”

Han Sang-won couldn’t resist the urge and pulled out a knife.

“Don’t you have to run away? Kim Shin-hyeong has already

escaped. Meanwhile, the police encirclement is narrowing.”

The manager’s room had a back door. Tae-hyuk thought it would be best for Han Sang-won to run away there.

Park Jung-bae, who was armed, would soon come here to receive the money that could be called the profits of this case. Before that happened, it would be more than easy for Han Sang-won to disappear.

However, more than three minutes had already passed by.

‘This bad detective...! He is completely late!’

Thus, Tae-hyuk had to deal with Han Sang-won alone.

“Fuck. I’ll kill you now, even if it means getting caught!”

Tae-hyuk felt sweat flowing down his back.

‘I-Isn’t this a dangerous situation...?’

There were loud sounds coming from outside the door. The guests who came to the casino had become mixed up in this mess.

At that moment, something unexpected happened.

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[Crime Skill: Violence has been learnt.]

-Can use iron pipes.

Tae-hyuk stared at the Demon Revealing Mirror with an absurd expression.

‘It is good that I received a new skill. What? Can use iron pipes?’

That was the end of it.

‘If I have the Violence skill, then shouldn’t I be able to win in a 17:1 fight? But what is this?!’

Despite how he felt, Tae-hyuk tried to use the skill. Then, as if it had always been there, an iron pipe appeared out of thin air. He caught it, since there were additional capabilities.

‘The cold feeling in my hand. I can only wield it in moderation. This really is the end for me!’

Unlike his bad appearance, Tae-hyuk was a ‘model student’ who had never been in a fight before. Even if he had the iron pipe, he wouldn’t be able to win in a fight against Han Sang-won, who was a gangster.

‘Ah, I don’t know! It is better than nothing!’

The agitated Han Sang-won rushed towards him and swung his knife towards Tae-hyuk’s arm to try and cut a wrist artery. Tae-hyuk aimed the iron pipe towards Han Sang-won’s head.

Kang!

There was a loud thud and the opponent’s body shook.

‘Uh, isn’t this better than I thought?’

Tae-hyuk had never seen a fight between criminals. All he could remember from the movies were the protagonists attacking the enemies.

Even so, he was able to deal an intense blow to Han Sang-won’s head. The iron pipe, summoned by the Violence skill, moved as if it was part of his body.

[With the effect of your stamina, you can deal stronger blows.]

[Agility will allow you to move more swiftly.]

‘Wah, my stats are applied!’

Tae-hyuk was filled with admiration. Violence was a simple skill that allowed him to summon an iron pipe. But when he held it in his hands, his stamina and agility stats were reflected within, and he could make stronger and more agile movements.

While Han Sang-won was the master of the back alley fights, Tae-hyuk was unlikely to lose this one.

“This bitch!”

After being hit by the iron pipe, Han Sang-won ran aggressively towards Tae-hyuk.

Tae-hyuk stepped forward and calmly swung the pipe towards the hand holding the knife.

Bam!

“Kuaaaak!”

Han Sang-won screamed and dropped the knife he was holding. Tae-hyuk confirmed it with the Demon Revealing Mirror. With the previous blow, he had completely learned the crime skill. It was the first time that he had received two skills from one incident.

“D, i, e! This bastard!”

Han Sang-won roared and ran to the table in the corner of the manager's room. He pulled out a pistol from the drawer, aiming it at Tae-hyuk.

‘Crazy, this isn’t America where guns are everywhere, you know?’

Tae-hyuk gave more strength to the hand holding the iron pipe. How could he fight against an enemy with a gun, instead of a knife?

At that moment, the reinforcement that he had been waiting for arrived.

“Chief Han. You keep acting poorly until the end. You lost.”

Clink.

Park Jung-bae entered the room, pulled out a gun and aimed it at Han Sang-won's head.

“Detective, Park! This bastard dared betray me!”

“This... Don’t misunderstand me, as we weren’t on the same side in the first place.”

“Have you forgotten that there is somebody behind this organization?”

Park Jung-bae laughed.

“I know. That person is politician Park Seong-ho, who, for reference, was caught in a political scandal last month, and is now confined in a halfway house.”

“Kuock!”

Han Sang-won grit his teeth.

Park Jung-bae knew everything, so his bluff wouldn't work. SY was an organization raised on the back of a politician, which was why the police weren't able to handle them properly. They pretended not to see the many criminal actions, but now it was different.

“It looks like you are saving money in order to make connections with other politicians. However, that is the wrong move. A few days ago, the name of SY emerged from Park Seong-ho's mouth. You are now a walking bomb.”

“.....”

“There is no one who will carry that bomb. It is the end of SY.”

Han Sang-won lost his spirit and sat down.

Tae-hyuk, who had been watching the conversation between the two people, opened his mouth.

“Detective Park, you are completely late.”

Park Jung-bae spoke while handcuffing Han Sang-won.

“I forgot to say the Miranda Rights because I was too busy talking. Chief Han, you heard it roughly.”

“.....”

Saliva emerged from Han Sang-won’s mouth.

“Things became a mess.”

Park Jung-bae placed Han Sang-won in a corner and turned his attention to Tae-hyuk. He came here alone because there was something he wanted.

“By the way, why was he pointing a gun at you? Even if he is a criminal, isn’t that overkill?”

“Does a corrupt cop care about that?”

“Ahaha...”



“Then, let’s split the revenue.”

Tae-hyuk showed Park Jung-bae the vitamin drink boxes containing money. There were four boxes with 50 million won each.

“Well, that is 200 million, and will be divided 5:5 per the contract. 100 million each.”

Park Jung-bae received two vitamin boxes from Tae-hyuk. He checked the contents and made a satisfied expression.

He had completely swept up the bad guys, and had also got some extra income doing so. It was a rewarding day.

“It is surprising that Mama knows someone like you. I confess that I did some investigation, since it was a proposal from a kid.”

“So it is like that. Well, it doesn’t matter.”

“You were the one who uncovered the crimes of Park Seong-ho’s son. Additionally, on the same day, Park Seong-ho’s wrongdoings were uncovered. Don’t you think this is a strange coincidence?”

Tae-hyuk laughed.

Park Jung-bae was more competent than he initially thought. However, he wouldn’t discover the truth of this case.

“Well, maybe we had a relationship in a past life.”

“A relationship?”

“Probably an ill-fated one.”

“Haha! An ill-fated relationship from a past life. Anyways, if you have another job similar to this one, then contact me again. I’ll be waiting.”

Then there was a signal from Park Jung-bae’s walkie-talkie.

–Detective Park. The situation is ending.

“Yes. I am coming now.”

Park Jung-bae pointed to the back door of the manager’s room.

“Go out that way. I’ll instruct them to release the net for a moment.”

“Thank you. Then...”

Corrupt policeman Park Jung-bae.

Tae-hyuk left the casino, Park Jung-bae gazing after him.

---

Tae-hyuk sighed with relief as he sat down on his bed.

The long day had ended.

“Detective Park. I’m sorry, but didn’t you know about this?”

Tae-hyuk took off his clothes, revealing the wads of cash taped underneath. Today, he had earned a total of 100 million from SY Capital.

“It is too big of an investment to only regain half.”

Ha-ran had 50 million stolen from her. He spent almost 20 million on the information. In addition, 30 million out of the 300 million was originally his. No matter how he thought about it, earning 100 million was a deficit.

‘It was the right answer to hid some money in advance.’

In a situation where guns were pointed at each other, one mistake could cost a person their lives. In the midst of all that, Tae-hyuk had been concealing the money.

“In the end, I received 200 million?”

Tae-hyuk laughed.

Not long ago, he had been working as a delivery man at a Chinese restaurant for 10,000 won. Now, he had just earned 200 million in one night.

It felt strange.

However, he had promised to take back 10 times the lost money. It was a bit lacking.

“There are still gifts left. This time, please be satisfied.”

Tae-hyuk whispered into Ha-ran's ears, who had fallen asleep waiting for him.

## Chapter 37 – Aid

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“I’m really sorry... I should have been paying more attention.”

Cho Kang-suk bowed from where he was sitting at the kitchen table, a heartfelt expression of regret on his face. Although Kang-suk had the face of a friendly neighbourhood hyung, he was actually a homicide detective.

He had been too busy these past three weeks. He only said that he had a case, and that he hadn’t been able to catch the culprit yet.

Tae-hyuk put the cutlery down in front of Kang-suk and said.

“Hyung doesn’t need to be sorry, because I know that you are busy with work.”

“Still! Hu... No. I couldn’t receive phone calls properly because I was in meetings every single day. I’ll kill him.”

Kang-suk became aware of the events that happened to Tae-hyuk and Ha-ran after everything was resolved. He truly seemed to be suffering at the fact that he was no help.

Kang-suk turned and looked at Ha-ran’s back who was cooking food in the kitchen.

“... Ha-ran said that she wanted to go back to university.”

“Yes.”

“If I knew this, then I wouldn’t have donated all of my monetary rewards.”

Tae-hyuk laughed.

He felt like he was looking at a puppy that wanted to help its owner.

“Why don’t you confess? I’ll help you.”

“W-What does that mean?! How could I say that to Ha-ran!”

“Hyung likes Noona, it’s written all over your face.”

Kang-suk’s face turned beet red. The hulking bear easily became a simpleton.

“T-T-That isn’t it! I have decided to first start as friends!”

“F-Friends? What is Hyung doing?!”

It was easy for even Tae-hyuk, who had no experience in dating, to know that Kang-suk was taking the wrong approach with Ha-ran.

“Anyways, have you been studying well?”

“Wow, what a change in subject!”

Tae-hyuk realized something after the Rosario theft and the SY Capital incidents. He couldn't take care of Ha-ran and Tae-min alone.

‘In addition, I will have to start fighting the blacklist members in earnest.’

Kang-suk was a protector, who he could ask for help when things got dangerous.

Tae-hyuk believed that was enough, but it turned out that wasn't the case.

Therefore, Tae-hyuk prepared a big plan to change the future, which was to decrease the gap between Kang-suk and Ha-ran. He could trust Kang-suk with Ha-ran. At the very least, he was a man who would shed his own blood before making a woman cry.

‘Besides, he likes Noona.’

Even Tae-hyuk could tell that his sister was nice and pretty, so it wasn't unusual for Kang-suk to fall for her.

‘Hum hum. Will he actually become my hyung?’

According to Tae-hyuk’s memories, Kang-suk was an old bachelor in his 40s. Kang-suk wasn’t a popular type among women. In addition, he spent most of his youth running around, catching criminals. In the end, he attended a matchmaker to find a marriage partner; however, his dates would run away upon seeing Kang-suk. A big bear sitting down in a suit. It was quite a shocking sight. Kang-suk started to say that he was married to crime. In the end, he abandoned dating.

‘Hyung is charming when he laughs...’

Tae-hyuk lowered his voice to avoid Ha-ran hearing and said.

“Kang-suk hyung. This is a gift.”

Tae-hyuk handed him an envelope with a smirk.

“Eh? Are these planetarium admission tickets?”

“Go with Noona when you have some time on the weekend, she likes to see the stars. Say it is between friends. Can’t you go and play with that?”

Kang-suk coughed unnecessarily loudly.

“Cough. I appreciate it. I have work this weekend though...”



“Then go next week! These tickets last for a month anyways.’

“I’m sorry, but my weekends won’t be free until this incident is over! Sob... I like the stars as well.”

Kang-suk lowered his head.

Tae-hyuk felt a strange protective instinct emerge as he saw the hulking bear with a dispirited expression.

‘While Hyung looks after Noona... I feel a strange maternal instinct!’

Tae-hyuk knew the truth about the two people.

Ha-ran would be entering a dormitory cram school next month. Prior to that, Tae-hyuk wanted for her to go on at least two or three dates with Kang-suk.

‘In order for that to happen, I need to solve Hyung’s murder case.’

Kang-suk had been working seven days a week recently. Even if he wanted to get closer to Ha-ran, there was just no time to.

Tae-hyuk asked in a small voice.

“By the way, Hyung. What case is it now?”

“Well, I’m sorry but I can’t say. Now that the mass media has caught wind of it, special instructions have come down.”

“Special instructions?”

Kang-suk mimed zipping his mouth closed.

Tae-hyuk found out a few facts from Kang-suk’s words.

First of all, there were at least two possible incidents if it needed to be kept secret.

The media was more likely to make a fuss about a serial murder case. Or, if they didn’t want the media knowing, then it might be a terrorist attack that would cause a huge blow to the economy.

Obviously, Kang-suk was responsible for one of two things.

Cho Kang-suk said.

“Anyway, let’s eat.”

In front of the two people, there was the delicious smell of cooked mackerel.

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“I have to do this for Kang-suk.”

Tae-hyuk grumbled as he used the ‘Violence’ skill on the roof of a house.

In order for Kang-suk and Ha-ran to go on a date, Kang-suk’s serial killer case had to be resolved. He wouldn’t have any time to spare before it was resolved. Tae-hyuk was going to use his crime skills to help Kang-suk.

In the end, Kang-suk’s job would be to take care of Ha-ran.

“First of all, let’s check the performance of this skill.”

The previous criminals that he met until now hadn’t been all that dangerous. He had to figure out exactly what he could do. Cho Kang-suk, a homicide detective, had been struggling for a few weeks, so it obviously wasn’t an ordinary criminal.

“Maybe it is one of the blacklist members.”

Tae-hyuk organized the list of criminals that he had written down. He memorized the dangerous criminals’ names, what they were doing, and how they got caught.

It was all listed in the blacklist.

“Hrmm... So far, I’ve met five?”

But one day, he would meet all of them. Tae-hyuk was sure of it.

He had met Yoo Cheol-ho on the day he received the future memories. Tae-hyuk had then helped put him in prison. Less than three weeks later, he got involved in the incident with Park Seong-ho’s son, Park Sung-kwang. Not long after that, he met the thief Moonlight Flower and Big Mama.

They were all criminals that Tae-hyuk remembered. Wasn’t this too much to be dismissed as a coincidence? It seemed like they were pulling him towards them.

“Either way, this criminal isn’t a joke. Who is it?”

The prosecutors wouldn’t be so desperate to conceal it if he wasn’t a cruel person.

Anyway, Tae-hyuk felt confident now that he had acquired the Violence skill. Unlike in the past, he could now physically overpower the opponent. It gave him a strange confidence.

Tae-hyuk grabbed the iron pipe created by the Violence skill. It allowed him to use his strength and agility.

Tae-hyuk wielded the iron pipe on the roof to rest how strong he was.

“Certainly, my body moves well, but I still don’t think it is enough to fight 17:1.”

Tae-hyuk was obsessed with the number 17:1. Among Tae-hyuk’s current stats, the lowest one was agility at 24 points.

Therefore, the movement of the iron pipe didn’t appeal to his spirit. If he could attack a little quicker...

“Anyhow, I can summon an iron pipe any time I like. Isn’t this surprisingly usable?”

The pipe was dented, and there was a handprint on it. At first, he was worried that moving it incorrectly would cause the pipe to bend. However, testing showed that it was very hard. It didn’t get any scratches, even when he put all his weight into it. He would be able to use it as support in emergency situations.

Tae-hyuk put the iron pipe on his shoulder and pulled out the smartphone in his pocket. It was a phone that he had newly acquired after the last incident.

“The time for restoring is almost over.”

He checked and there were still a few minutes remaining.

The smartphone used by Kang-suk stored most of the data on its own server. If he had the ID and password then he could download it to his own smartphone. He could see everything from the contacts to the messages Kang-suk sent.

Tae-hyuk asked Kang-suk for help with purchasing a new phone.

In the meantime, he had been using Ha-ran's old folder phone. In other words, it was a natural monument compared to the advanced technology of the smartphone.

Kang-suk made an enlightened expression, like an American missionary visiting Korea, and started his lecture. In the meantime, Tae-hyuk grabbed Kang-suk's smartphone and obtained the ID and password. It was that simple to obtain Kang-suk's personal information.

"I'd like to see some information about the investigation. Please don't let me get nudes by mistake."

First, he decided to be satisfied with this much. After a few moments, the restoration of the phone was completed perfectly. A smartphone with the same information as Kang-suk's was born.

"Then shall I check his messages?"

Tae-hyuk skillfully navigated the touch screen to check the messages and mailbox.

“Wah. I feel nervous when there are no apps. By the way, he hasn’t linked his mail account yet? He uses a smartphone like an old phone.”

Tae-hyuk clicked his tongue. Kang-suk acted like a primitive person. But Kang-suk was like a caveman.

Kang-suk only used three things on his smartphone.

Telephone calls. Text messages. And the map.

Anyway, he was able to get a clue about this case. Then he muttered with a blank expression.

“Wait a minute. Is Hyung part of this bastard’s case?”

He was one of the five worst criminals recorded in the blacklist.

The watering hippo. That was his nickname.

Tae-hyuk stared at a bathroom from far away. One officer was standing guard. (TL: Bathroom in this case seems to refer to the public baths or sauna in Korea, not toilets)

‘Perhaps this is where the incident happened.’

Tae-hyuk referred to the blacklist as he chased after the trail of the hippo. But there was one strange thing.

The hippo he remembered didn't start now, but three months later. Then why were there already victims? But looking at the method and frequency, the criminal was clearly the hippo.

‘There are already two victims.’

There was a common point about the days when the hippo committed a crime.

It was a day with a full moon. He murdered every 29 days.

Tae-hyuk looked up at the sky.

There was a round man with a slight dark edge in a corner. There was three days to the next full moon.

Before that, he had to find the trail of the hippo.

“Let's make a connection.”

Tae-hyuk took out his phone and called the officer standing guard.



## Chapter 38 – Aid #2

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Tae-hyuk first needed to check the crime scene to know his opponent.

‘The cop... cop...’

Kang-suk’s address book contained almost 800 people. Despite his appearance, Kang-suk was a meticulous person. Therefore, his contacts were organized by category.

“A total of 19 people.”

It was more than he thought. First, he had to find out who was protecting the entrance to the bathroom.

‘I would be nice if he had a badge with a name on it. Do I need to check them all?’

Tae-hyuk called the cops in Kang-suk’s contacts.

Dururu-

-Who is it?

“Is this Hae-un’s phone?”

-No.

“Ah... I’m really sorry.”

Tae-hyuk repeated the same thing 10 times before he found the right cop. As the phone signal rang, the phone of the cop in front of him started ringing.

‘He is Kim Jong-wook!’

Tae-hyuk imitated Cho Kang-suk’s voice using Voice Modulation.

“Kim Jong-wook? It’s me, Detective Cho Kang-suk.”

–Eh! Detective Cho Kang-suk! What is going on?

Tae-hyuk inwardly cheered.

‘Indeed, a cop should know the police officers in charge of this case.’

“I think I left my phone behind while investigating the crime scene, can you take a look at the counter?”

-Yes, I understand. I will do so straight away!

Kim Jong-wook followed Cho Kang-suk’s instructions and

disappeared in the direction of the bathroom.

He was holding a flashlight. It looked good from a distance.

‘Then, let’s go!’

Tae-hyuk avoided the cops’ eyes as much as possible as he stealthily crept up to the crime scene.

‘By the way, their salaries... What about their pensions?’

He moved on to thinking about happy things for Ha-ran’s future. The bathroom where the murder took place had crime scene tape all around the entrance.

Tae-hyuk laughed.

He was wearing a leather jacket and skinny jeans, with an iron pipe in one hand. He had the perfect appearance of a criminal.

Once the ‘Violence’ skill was activated, his physical abilities increased according to his physical stats. He couldn’t help but wonder what would happen.

“Uh, I don’t want to be arrested as the criminal right now.”

Despite having little to no knowledge of criminal profiling, Seo

Tae-hyuk knew one fact.

It was something frequently covered in crime novels and movies: a criminal always goes back to the scene of the crime! This was why the police were stationed at where the second murder took place. Therefore, he had to hide if he didn't want any unusual misunderstandings to take place.

Tae-hyuk looked at the iron pipe that he was holding.

“Well, hopefully I won't have to use this.”

The body was found was in the women's bathroom. There was a strange atmosphere, due to it being a place where a person had died. The evidence collected by the police left a dust trail.

However, according to the blacklist, there was definitely one thing remaining.

The bathroom was empty of water. Instead, the shape of a person crouching down was drawn with a white spray.

Tae-hyuk felt goosebumps as he saw it. Three weeks ago, someone had died in the exact same position as the picture.

Tae-hyuk took out a notebook from his pocket and used the Forgery skill to draw the crime scene as a reference. At that moment, a strange illusion emerged in front of Tae-hyuk's eyes.

“Ugh... W-what? Aaaaack!”

There was a naked woman with her arms tied behind her back, her body was trapped in a bathtub full of water. Her neck was tied up, and she couldn't move her head. Still, she was able to breathe due to the long tube in her mouth. And the tube...

“Heok... Keok!”

Tae-hyuk started breathing roughly. He couldn't even understand what he had just seen. He had just used the Forgery skill, so why did that image appear?

Tae-hyuk pulled out the Demon Revealing Mirror.

[The Forgery skill has found an intense image.]

[The work has been completed through automatic mode.]

Tae-hyuk looked at his notebook, as if he was enchanted by something.

There was a picture of a dying woman that had been created by the Forgery skill in less than a minute. The picture was drawn with a pen, and yet it seemed so real.

“Uck...!”

At that moment, Tae-hyuk bent over as he felt some nausea. Fortunately, he hadn't eaten dinner yet. He just felt a little sick.

Tae-hyuk knew extrasensory perceptions were similar to this.

“It was psychometry...”

The ability to see images from objects and places. The Forgery skill was similar to that.

However, he couldn't rejoice. The image of the person dying was intensely burnt into Tae-hyuk's brain. It seemed like the scene would emerge every time he closed his eyes, like a curse.

Tae-hyuk bit his lip.

He had come here to confirm if the killer was truly the 'hippo.' It wasn't to see a woman dying.

This had happened almost one month ago, he wouldn't be found right now.

‘... First of all, let's finish up here.’

Tae-hyuk shook his head to forget the scene he just saw. He entered the bathroom. If the killer was truly the hippo, then it had to be here.

Tae-hyuk leaned down towards the floor. He started to carefully search it. Sometimes there was a white powder visible in the water. It was creepy, but he licked it.

“This...”

It was salt.

No matter how good the police were, it wasn't easy to find it mixed in with the water.

“The murder tool is salt water...”

Tae-hyuk was reminded of that person.

“... The hippo.”

Originally, he was a serial killer who would start his activities in three months. He was one of the worst five criminals in Tae-hyuk's blacklist. He had awakened earlier than scheduled.

Tae-hyuk then had a sudden realization: he was currently the only one in the country who knew the Hippo's identity.

---

Cho Kang-suk looked at his watch with an anxious expression. 15 minutes had passed since the promised meeting time.

“This is why punctuality is a problem in Korea!”

He pulled out his phone and checked the message that had arrived 30 minutes ago.

–Sunbae. I am leaving now. I’ll be there in 10 minutes.

“That was more than 10 minutes ago.”

Kang-suk finished his lukewarm coffee and went to the counter to get a refill. Thanks to his younger brother, he realized that this cafe was a very good place for meeting people. He had been using it often since then.

Kang-suk took out the envelop that Tae-hyuk gave him as a gift. It was a planetarium admission ticket that was available for one month. On the back was the phone number of a French restaurant with a good atmosphere. It meant to eat here after seeing the stars.

Kang-suk couldn’t help laughing after seeing it.

“Who wouldn’t want to go? If only I didn’t have to catch this criminal.”



Kang-suk said and put the tickets back in his pocket.

Who knows? Maybe the serial killer would suddenly be arrested and he could go out with Ha-ran.

“There is time left. If I send a message to Ha-ran... But what if I am an annoyance? Ohh...

Kang-suk grabbed his head as his body trembled.

The other guests at the cafe started looking at him.

-Ah, doesn't he look like a gangster?

-Looking at his phone and then trembling... Don't tell me?'

-Shhh! Be quiet! He will hear!

Kang-suk laughed. Today, he had come to meet a guest. Therefore, he was wearing a suit that didn't fit him well. He had a large muscular body and was over 180cm tall. He had dark sunglasses. At first glance, it was natural for others to misinterpret his strength.

Then the man sitting near Kang-suk spoke.

“Excuse me, excuse me... Cho Kang-suk hyung-nim?”

Cho Kang-suk looked at the person.

The man was wearing casual attire and had glasses.

“Who?”

“Oh, sorry for introducing myself so late. I am Shin Se-ho, a PD at ABS Station.”

Shin Se-ho pulled out a business card from his wallet.

“You are a new PD.”

“Haha. You don’t need to emphasize it. I’m familiar with you. Detective Cho is very famous among my colleagues. The detective who caught Yoo Cheol-ho. This meeting was due to chance. Then can I hear the story about that time?”

Cho Kang-suk clicked his tongue. What chance? He knew the PD had been following him for a few days. Shin Se-ho seated himself in front of Cho Kang-suk.

Kang-suk knew why the PD was following him.

He smelt the hippo case.

“I’m sorry, but today I came to meet a junior, not to work. If you want an interview then please fill out the official forms.”

“Aish, don’t be like that. Anyway, I’m here as a customer. So I will just drink hot chocolate from the sidelines.”

Kang-suk noticed the microphone in Shin Se-ho’s pocket.

He suddenly felt fatigued. It was hard to fight crime. Now he had to pay attention to the media as well.

Kang-suk whipped his hand like he was killing a mosquito.

He would receive media persecution if he tried to kick the reporter out of here. He needed to be careful.

“Well, do whatever you want.”

“Haha. Yes. I understand.”

Then the door opened and someone entered the cafe. The person was a little taller than Kang-suk, with an intellectual air about him. He was wearing a Rolex watch and an Armani suit. A BMW key was hanging from his fingers.

Cho Kang-suk clicked his tongue. He was wearing at least 20 million won, and had the air of a rich person.

“Joo Hyun-ho! Over here!”

“Uh, Sunbae. Aren’t I a little bit late? I’m sorry.”

“What is a little bit? I refilled my coffee five times while waiting.”

“Aish. I was only a few minutes late. There was nowhere to park.”

Joo Hyun-ho smiled and sat down in front of Kang-suk.

Joo Hyun-ho had the appearance of a celebrity in a high class suit so the eyes of the females sitting nearby started to light up.

They wanted to talk to him but stopped themselves when they saw Kang-suk sitting opposite him.

Joo Hyun-ho was a junior from Kang-suk’s university days. He majored in criminal psychology and worked in the criminal behaviour analysis team.

The so-called profiler. In this field, he was one of the three most influential profilers in the country.

Kang-suk muttered in a small voice.

“There is a reporter next to me, so speak softly. I know that you are busy with a lot of cases right now. There is a crime scene that I want you to look at.”

“You know that I don’t handle straight murders.”

He would only take the cases that attracted his interest.

Kang-suk hit him on the head.

“Hey. This is a mystery that we have no clue about. Be serious. Just listen to me. I didn’t want to call you. But he is a completely crazy guy.”

Hyun-ho’s eyes shone.

He was a man who became a profiler because he liked things like this.

## Chapter 39 – Aid #3

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Kang-suk gave a brief outline of the hippo case.

Shin Se-ho would just follow him anyway if he moved to another place. The dangerous part was having a conversation without any sensitive information leaking out.

“... Wah. So they drink water until they die. They weren’t forced to do it?”

“Hey! Keep quiet! There are ears listening.”

“Aigoo. Sorry.”

Hyun-ho bowed exaggeratedly.

Kang-suk laughed. Although it had been more than seven years since they graduated from university, Shin Hyun-ho was still the same old Shin Hyun-ho.

The two people had met at a university reasoning club. Cho Kang-suk and Joo Hyun-ho liked reasoning out mysteries, and won the TV program ‘Mafia Game.’

Hyun-ho was the so-called ‘chaebol’ who owned several buildings in Gangnam. By only breathing, he could earn hundreds of millions of won in a month.

Kang-suk always wondered why Hyun-ho became a profiler. Hyun-ho had responded to that question with:

–I can't be satisfied with only fiction, Sunbae.

Kang-suk felt goosebumps when he thought of the Hyun-ho of that time.

“Hyun-ho. These are my personal thoughts.”

“Yes?”

“I'm glad that you became a profiler. In many ways.”

“Ahaha! Thank you for praising me, Sunbae.”

After exchanging some conversation, Kang-suk and Hyun-ho rose from their spot.

Kang-suk went to the counter and paid before saying.

“Hyun-ho, start your car now. Run away!”

At Kang-suk's words, Joo Hyun-ho ran out.

Shin Se-ho, who had been watching the two people at ease, was amazed. Cho Kang-suk and Joo Hyun-ho had suddenly disappeared from right in front of him.

Today's scoop was over. However, this wasn't enough to make Shin Se-ho give up.

---

After the cafe, Kang-suk and Hyun-ho headed to the bathroom where the second murder occurred.

Kang-suk sat in the passenger seat and stretched out. If this case were ever to be exposed to the media, then it wouldn't just end with him taking off all his clothes and begging.

Hyun-ho turned on the police signal since he wanted to see the scene quickly.

Cho Kang-suk said.

“Oh, have you eaten lunch? Let's go to eat after seeing the scene. Hyung will pay!”

“Ey, you're just going to eat jajangmyun again. Furthermore, I'm not hungry. From now on, I will be seeing something truly delicious.”

Hyun-ho laughed like he was truly having fun.



“Sometimes I wonder if you’re either a genius or a psycho.”

“Genius is right, Sunbae.”

“Aigoo... Ah, that is the bathroom.”

Kang-suk sighed and pointed to a building across the street.

“The poor owner, it seems like it was just recently built. Now that a murder has happened, he will need to sell it. Even so, there aren’t many public baths or saunas in the area.”

“I agree.”

After parking the car in the area, Kang-suk headed to the scene of the crime. The policeman on guard stared at the gleaming BMW with wide eyes. Then he nodded with a convinced expression after seeing Joo Hyun-ho exit the driver’s seat.

“Detectives, you’ve worked hard!”

“Jong-wook as well.”

“No! Then come in!”

All the evidence had been collected from the scene of the

incident, including the dust.

Kang-suk pulled out the investigation file from his bag. The evidence was placed according to where they were found.

Hyun-ho scanned the investigation file and pointed to where the body was.

“Then I’ll be looking at this. Sunbae should recreate how the body was found over there.”

“Hey! Why should I recreate it?”

“It is needed for the investigation.”

“Sheesh.”

Kang-suk grumbled, but reluctantly followed Hyun-ho’s instructions. If Hyun-ho didn’t become a police officer, then he would be a criminal. However, Kang-suk had to recognize his abilities.

Kang-suk lay down on the floor in the same shape that was drawn, bending his arms and body as much as possible.

Hyun-ho couldn’t hold back his laughter.

“Hahahaha! Sunbae! You look like a deep fried shrimp.”

“... This bastard.”

Kang-suk got up and put Hyun-ho into a headlock.

“Keeek! I-I surrender! Give up!”

“I knew you would be like this. Are you a complete pervert?”

“B-But I think I know how he killed them.”

Kang-suk freed Hyun-ho.

He knew how the victims had died. They had drunk a large amount of water, causing their breathing to be blocked and their internal organs to rupture. However, the mystery of how it happened was still unsolved. Yet, Joo Hyun-ho had solved it after only five minutes.

“It seems like I did well to bring you over. Yes, Joo Hyun-ho brain cells are still working.”

“Yep. Now leave it to me!”

Joo Hyun-ho noted some of the evidence.

First of all, the victim had been biting a long tube until she died, with leather straps tied around her neck. Finally, there was a bucket filled with various foreign substances.

“The victim was in an immovable state with her arms tied behind her back.”

“That’s right. He then forced them to drink a lot of water... Ah, damn. Crazy bastard. I will surely put him in jail!”

Kang-suk directed some killing intent towards the criminal. However, Joo Hyun-ho’s reasoning was just beginning.

“Their neck was tied down with a leather strap, and the water was in the bathtub?”

“... I said it in the car.”

“Then that means that her head was completely submerged. If that was the case, then she should’ve immediately drowned.”

“But she didn’t die straight away.”

“Yes. She was able to breathe in a certain amount of air through the tube, which could be referred to as a lifeline.”

There was a long, plastic tube found in the evidence, the victim holding it until the moment of her death. There were the clear

teeth marks on one side.

“So, she struggled in a tied state...”

The victim’s body was full of small wounds.

The coroner said that she was probably floundering about.

“Yes. It seems like the perpetrator blocked the tube connected to the victim’s mouth and then released it, in order to enjoy her suffering.”

Crunch.

Kang-suk broke the file he was holding.

“Of course, the culprit wasn’t satisfied with just that, so he used this.”

Hyun-ho pointed to the bucket next.

The capacity was one litre.

“The victim drank water desperately. Why? Well, just imagine it. The victim’s eyes are covered and her body is tied up. The culprit then blocks the tube to make her choke.”

“.....”

Kang-suk's face turned red as he desperately tried to hold back.

“Then the bucket appeared. There was clearly liquid in here. Water wasn't the only liquid in her body, was it? Milk, soy sauce... There was also cooking oil. This is the reason why.”

Hyun-ho put the tube in the bucket.

“One litre. She had to desperately drink it all in order to breathe.”

First was milk. Then there was soy sauce. Finally, the cooking oil. He gave her increasingly hard things to drink.

Despite being nauseated, she had to drink in order for her to breathe. Desperately...

“If she drank it all, then she could breathe again. That's why the bucket was empty at the moment of death. And...”

This time, Hyun-ho put the tube in the bathtub.

“Lastly, the hippo placed the tube here. The victim started to drink litres of water that she couldn't finish. In the end...”

The stomach became engorged, and the victim drank water until the moment of death.

All this was done in order to live? If she drank one litre of water then she could breathe. Just one more sip... If she took one more sip, then she could breathe. She believed in something that hadn't been promised, and drank the water in the bathtub. And in the end...

The desperate act of trying to live drove herself to her ultimate death.

“This crazy bastard!”

Kang-suk howled like a beast at the terrible truth. The hippo used the victim's will to live as a murder tool.

“My reasoning is up to here. Uh, by the way, there is salt. Then, the last thing the victim drank was salt water? What was he thinking when he made her drink that? Sunbae...? Um. I will tell you my profile after you calm down a bit.”

Kang-suk was ready to shoot a gun if the hippo appeared in front of him.

Eventually, he settled down after 30 minutes.

“I'm sorry. I was a little excited.”

“No problem, Sunbae. I’ll tell you what I’ve figured out about the hippo now.”

Hyun-ho gave his rough profile containing the hippo’s age and personality to Kang-suk.

After finishing, Hyun-ho said.

“My job is over. Now it is Sunbae’s turn. Please catch the killer. Ah right. This is a personal favor. Once you arrest him, can you leave the psychological analysis to me? I’m interested in the criminal called the hippo.”

Hyun-ho laughed like he was happy.

Kang-suk replied.

“... That isn’t hard. But I don’t know if the bastard will be able to speak properly.”

If Kang-suk caught him, then there would be a punch in the face.

Kang-suk’s eyes were filled with killing intent.

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There were only two days left until the next full moon.



Tae-hyuk knew who the hippo was, his job, what he looked like, what he liked, all of those things.

The problem was that he knew the hippo too well. He knew information that only the hippo would know. If he wasn't careful, then he might be framed as the hippo.

“I have to avoid being falsely accused, no matter what.”

Tae-hyuk laughed bitterly as he thought of the identity of the hippo.

Tae-hyuk knew where he was. If he beat the hippo's head with the iron pipe and took him to the police station, then the murders would no longer happen. However, there was no evidence that he was the hippo, meaning there would be no reason to hold the hippo.

The most obvious thing to do was to catch him attempting to commit a crime.

He had packed a few hidden cameras from the voyeur incident a while ago so they would be very useful.

Tae-hyuk smiled at the hidden cameras on the table. Then he would go and install these at the hippos' third crime scene...

At this moment, Tae-hyuk realized that he had forgotten one important thing. He couldn't remember the exact place of the crime.

“Wait a minute. Obviously the hippo killed the third time at the... Ugh, damn. It was definitely an aquarium. I don't remember the exact aquarium!”

Tae-hyuk looked at the blacklist. The exact name wasn't written down.

“Well, there aren't many aquariums. Eh? Wait a minute. Aquariums are even open at night. It isn't a place to commit a crime, even if there are no customers.

The hippo didn't kill the victims instantly. He enjoyed watching them die slowly. If so, doing it in an aquarium would be impossible.

Tae-hyuk connected to the Internet on his smartphone and searched for an aquarium that wasn't open. There was only one place.

Tae-hyuk checked the location.

The aquarium was approximately five kilometres from his home.

“... Isn't this closer than I thought?”

It was around 15 bus stops away. In such a nearby place, a bizarre murder would take place two days later.

“Then tonight, I will go and install the trap.”

Tae-hyuk had no intention of ending it with the camera alone.

He had the crime skills to help him.

## Chapter 40 – Aid #4

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The serial killer called the Hippo.

Tae-hyuk thought of Yoo Cheol-ho while he was eating.

‘I was very lucky.’

It was only three months ago.

The events from back then felt like a long time ago, causing Tae-hyuk to sigh. He woke up with memories of the future, and received the crime skills.

He pretended to be as calm as possible, but that was just a facade.

‘Hyung bought me some ice cream, but I only ate a little bit of it before throwing it away.’

At that time, his only crime skill was the ‘Robbery’ skill. At the time, he still had no idea about his abilities and titles. If Tae-hyuk had come across the Hippo at that time, then he wouldn’t have even a single thought about catching him.

However, Yoo Cheol-ho was so infamous that he appeared on the front page of the newspapers every single day. Every single person knew his face. Tae-hyuk could catch him just by knowing his hiding place and reporting it to the police.

‘The Hippo is different.’

Only two people in this world knew his identity. The Hippo, who was the killer. The other person was Seo Tae-hyuk, who had memories of the future.

The police saw the Hippo as a serial killer, and created a dedicated team to catch the criminal. Tae-hyuk could see how Cho Kang-suk was desperately working every night.

Surprisingly, the arrest rate of criminals in South Korea was quite high. By default, the country's size was small, so there weren't many places to hide. The fact that every person's fingerprints were stored as data was a tremendous advantage in investigations. The CCTV were well spread out and installed in buildings, so it was a difficult country to commit a crime in.

South Korea also had a high awareness of the world of scientific investigation, so they used advanced investigation techniques during crime investigations.

A blood smear expert could reconstruct a crime scene based on only the location and size of a blood drop. A fingerprint expert used fingerprints, as well as palm prints. There were even profiling experts who approximated the criminal's psychological state of mind.

They used more advanced investigation methods than the past method of searching around the victim's body.

In the case of accidental murders, most perpetrators were quickly caught. However, it was difficult to identify a serial killer who killed indiscriminately.

Thus, the scientific investigation methods were a tremendous aid. No matter how perfect a criminal was, there was no incident where they didn't make a single mistake.

One common mistake was drinking from a cup or paper cup, then throwing it away. Others included: Leaving even one strand of hair behind at the crime scene, and unintentionally spitting and leaving saliva. Experts could even extract the DNA of the criminal from fingerprints or saliva left behind on the victim's body.

There was no killer that didn't leave behind a trail of evidence. However, unlike his ridiculous nickname, the Hippo was a perfect killer. He didn't leave behind any evidence.

It was why the investigation gradually became a labyrinth. That was why there were rumours that a demon was killing people.

‘... The Hippo will kill 10 people over the next year. His modus operandi will also remain the same. Feeding the victim a great deal of salt water. Why on earth has he started his activities earlier than scheduled? I need to strengthen my crime skills and help Kang-suk hyung's and Noona's love affair.’

Tae-hyuk was completely different from when he first caught Yoo Cheol-ho.

He now had the ‘Robbery’, ‘Voice Modulation’, ‘Spying’, ‘Forgery’, ‘Gambling’, and ‘Violence’ skills, making a total of six crime skills.

Thanks to An Eun-young’s studying skill, his intelligence stat rose greatly. He could also make a wide variety of props using the Forgery skill.

It was different from when he was forced to call the police for Yoo Cheol-ho. He could fight the Hippo.

Tae-hyuk intuitively sensed it. Until now, he had used a single crime skill at a time in order to catch the criminals. It was a condition for acquiring the skill.

“But this time, I can’t afford to not use all of my skills.”

This time, he would have to use all six crime skills in order to deal with the Hippo. That was his hunch.

Tae-hyuk looked in front at the things that he had prepared. Paints, plaster boards, ropes and glass beads. There were many other things piled up.

He put them in a big bag, and thanks to his stamina (61), Tae-hyuk was able to carry it. He raised it up and over his shoulders.

“Ugh. Heavy!”

However, every one of the items inside were necessary things that couldn't be removed. From this moment on, he would go prepare the trap to catch the Hippo before he murdered someone tomorrow.

Obviously the victim...

“.....!”

Tae-hyuk moaned as a fact suddenly rose in his head.

He suddenly recalled the name of the third victim killed by the Hippo. Of course, that didn't mean anything would change, since they were alive today. The victim wouldn't believe it even if he said anything.

Above all, he had to prepare the crime scene to catch the Hippo. Therefore, he had to let the crime of kidnapping the victim be committed.

But the person the Hippo hoped to kill tomorrow was someone who Tae-hyuk knew.

“... Jung Yuri.”

Tae-hyuk realized why Jung Yuri wasn't in his memories. He had



gotten a job as a security guard at Sungjin Group five years later. At that time, Jung Yuri wasn't alive.

She was supposed to die tomorrow to the Hippo. Savagely murdered.

Tae-hyuk didn't do anything for a while before opening the window and looking up at the night sky. The moon was almost full, but it was covered by the dark clouds so nothing could be seen. There was just darkness.

---

Jung Yuri's legs didn't work. She had been weak from birth. The muscles of her lower half slowly stiffened.

Nevertheless, she never once thought that her life was difficult or uncomfortable. She had a sister who was born a year earlier. The two of them were always together.

By the time she entered primary school, Jung Yuri's legs were no longer moving. She had to ride a wheelchair from then on.

It was her sister who pushed it. Her sister always helped her move forward.

“Unni...”

Her sister had died three years ago. She was brutally murdered at

the hands of the serial killer, Yoo Cheol-ho.

When Yuri met him, he smiled and felt regret that he couldn't kill her. Yuri spat on Yoo Cheol-ho's face, and he said,

“Kuhuhuhu... Just wait. I will be sure to escape and kill you.”

Yoo Cheol-ho really did escape. She still had goosebumps when she thought of that time.

However, she was different from her sister. Jung Yuri's father was now the vice president of a large company. She was also working under him, so she was able to set an enormous bounty on Yoo Cheol-ho.

A few days later, he was caught. This time, he was trapped in a place where he could never escape.

“Hu...”

Her whole body was wet with sweat from pushing her wheelchair. Jung Yuri pulled out a handkerchief from her handbag and wiped her forehead.

She was on the way back from a meeting with a client. The driver said he would give her a ride, but Jung Yuri said that she wanted to go on her own.

No one had pushed her since her sister had died. Now, she moved forward with her own strength.

She desperately exercised and raised her physical strength, her complexion improving dramatically. She became more beautiful every day. She even received suggestions to become an advertising model.

“Ahum... This will be difficult.”

Jung Yuri looked at the hill that appeared in front of her. It was a moderately steep slope.

However, she vowed to live strong after her sister's death. Jung Yuri prepared to put her hands on the wheels of her wheelchair.

It was at that moment that someone started to push the wheelchair from behind. Jung Yuri was startled and looked back.

“It will be hard on your own. If you don't mind, then I would like to help.”

A friendly looking man smiled at her.

“Ahaha... Thank you. By the way, have I met you somewhere before? Your face is really familiar.”

The man said.

“I was with the one who came for a bounty. Cho Kang-suk... Do you remember?”

“Ah, that person!”

The man laughed.

Then Jung Yuri was pricked in the neck.

---

“Uhh...”

In the darkness, the dazed Jung Yuri opened her eyes.

She couldn't see anything. Her eyes were covered with leather. Her legs couldn't move in the first place, and her arms were tied behind her back.

She couldn't do anything other than sweat.

“Oof! Oof!”

Her body was in a place like a glass box.

She wriggled her toes and something cold.

‘Water...? I-It is filling up!’

She would die in this way.

Jung Yuri recalled the man who kidnapped her. It wasn't Yoo Cheol-ho. However, he had the same eyes. It would be not just her sister, but Jung Yuri herself would also be killed by someone.

Tears flowed down through the blindfold.

‘I, am I going to die? U-Unni. S-Save me... Unni...!’

The water had already risen to her head.

Jung Yuri couldn't breathe.

---

Joo Hyun-ho was drinking a cup of milk in his room.

Classical music flowed from speakers that cost over 20 million won. Chopin Etude Op.10-4, also known as ‘Chase’. It was his favorite piece.

What was it? No matter how hard he thought, he felt like there was something in the corner of his mind that he was missing.

He wondered what it was. What on earth had he missed?

Joo Hyun-ho looked at the case file scattered across the floor. Everything about the Hippo incident was written there.

“The first murder occurred on October 8th. The second happened on the 5th of November, and today is December 3rd...”

And then suddenly...

“October 8th was Chuseok (Korean holiday). November 5th...”

Chuseok always occurred on the full moon. The second murder also happened on the day of the full moon.

Then surely...

Joo Hyun-ho was amazed as he had a thought. If his idea was correct, then the murderer was probably preparing for his next kill right now.

“I-I need to call Kang-suk sunbae!”

Joo Hyun-ho contacted Kang-suk. However, the phone call didn't connect.

“Damn.”

Joo Hyun-ho was forced to look for a place where the Hippo could commit the crime.

He mobilized all of his connections.

First, he sent a group text.

–Confirm if there is a bathhouse, aquarium, or swimming pool that isn’t open and check them out! The hippo might be working right now!

How far ahead was he?

Joo Hyun-ho couldn’t stay in the house. In the end, he put on a coat and left his house.

Ding! Ding! Ding!

At that moment, the clock chimed, indicating that it was 12:00.

December 4th. It was the day that the Hippo would kill.

He used the map application to look for a place with a lot of water near his house. The Hippo took a long time to kill, so it should be a place that wasn’t open right now. There was only one place nearby

that fit the conditions.

H Aquarium.

Joo Hyun-ho smirked. He was so thrilled that he couldn't stand it. He had always seen profiles of criminals from his desk, but this time, he might even be able to face them himself.

“Sunbae... Sunbae... Pick up your phone. Let's go hunt the Hippo.”

As Kang-suk didn't answer his calls, Joo Hyun-ho started the BMW.

---

Tae-hyuk looked at his work with a satisfied expression.

He took advantage of his six crime skills to create an amazing trap.

“It is perfect for my guest.”

Tae-hyuk was at the entrance of an aquarium. It was a place that didn't feel the need to employ more than one guard when it wasn't daytime.

Tae-hyuk also confirmed that the guard was sleeping in front of



the TVs in the office.

He checked the time.

It was 12:09 a.m. on December 4th.

The Hippo would be waiting inside the aquarium.

Creak.

Tae-hyuk entered through the back door of H Aquarium.

It was time to hunt the Hippo.

# Chapter 41 – The Hippo Hunt

---

‘First of all, draw the hippo to the prepared stage...’

H Aquarium was split into two areas. Area one was where various aquatic creatures could be seen underwater. It was what people imagined when they thought about aquariums.

Area two was a venue where shows of cute animals could be seen. The space contained an area where audiences could be seated, and the stage was where the handlers and animals would perform. In addition, there were underground facilities such as convenience stores, car parks, shops, and restrooms.

However, area two was meager compared to area one. The hippo was in the performer’s waiting room in area two. It was where the murder would take place.

‘Isn’t this turning out well?’

Tae-hyuk had installed more than 10 small cameras in three places. The hippo’s work was being recorded in 1080p high definition. It would perfectly prove that the Hippo was the serial killer.

The safest method was to retrieve the cameras and then help Jung Yuri escape. The police would then take care of the rest.

‘The problem is that Yuri noona will be uncomfortable.’

There was no wheelchair in here to transport Jung Yuri. He would have to carry her somehow as he escaped. It was much slower than running alone, so he wouldn't be able to run away from the Hippo that would chase in pursuit.

Even if he had the 'Violence' skill, there was a possibility that a dangerous situation would occur. If things went wrong, then Jung Yuri could possibly be used as a hostage.

That's why Tae-hyuk lured the House over to his prepared stage with a plan to win over him there.

Tae-hyuk pulled a bunch of keys from his pocket. This was the master key for the aquarium. He would be able to open any door and go anywhere in the aquarium with this.

Tae-hyuk licked his lips in anticipation as he looked at it.

'Yes. 'Robbery' was originally used for things like this!'

At first, it was a useless skill that just stole underwear. However, after the cheating incident occurred, it strengthened and he could steal the things he desired. Thus, this was possible.

Tae-hyuk stole the master key from the guard patrolling during the day. He quickly made a copy frame using clay and plastic. He was able to do it without much difficulty due to both the 'Forgery' skill and his dexterity.

‘Then I picked up the keys that had fallen to the ground and received the duplicate key.’

The material had changed from metal to plastic, but other than that, it was exactly the same as the original.

Dururu!

“Hik!”

As Tae-hyuk was lost in thought, he received a phone call. He pretended to be unconcerned, but he was going to have to fight a crazy killer soon. It was strange not to be nervous.

The caller ID read ‘Seo Ha-ran.’ Once she saw that Tae-hyuk was gone in the middle of the night, she became worried and called. Tae-hyuk sighed and picked up the phone.

“Uh, Noona. Did you wake up?”

–Yes, where are you? I got up and went to check on you. You weren’t there.

“I couldn’t sleep, so I went out for a walk.”

–I see... It’s good because I can hear Tae-hyuk’s voice. Hehehe.

Tae-hyuk realized that he almost never talked to his sister over the phone.

“I’ll be back soon. Don’t worry.”

-... You aren’t doing anything foolish are you?

Was this a woman’s intuition? Ha-ran was always showing her siblings a smiling face. However, she would occasionally say piercing things.

“Don’t think too much. Ah right, will you be free this weekend?”

-Yes.

“There will be something good soon.”

-Really? What is it? Should I look forward to it?

Tae-hyuk didn’t say anything as he inwardly thought. That smile couldn’t disappear from his sister’s face. Therefore, the Hippo needed to be caught.

Ha-ran suddenly said in a serious voice.

-Seo Tae-hyuk. Don’t forget that I am by your side no matter

what you do, so don't get a cold from staying out too long. Then, I will hang up.

“.....”

Tae-hyuk closed his phone.

His sister's words were still ringing in his ears. His sister was always on his side. Tae-hyuk had heard the same words from Haran when she came to visit him in jail. He was able to endure the desperate situation due to those words.

“Cough!”

Tae-hyuk coughed and slapped both of his cheeks. He could be emotional after catching the Hippo. He decided to only think about this right now.

After finishing the call with his sister, Tae-hyuk went to the broadcasting room.

‘First, I need to make the Hippo leave his spot. Then, I need help Yuri noona to a safe place.’

Tae-hyuk imitated the voice of a security guard with the ‘Voice Modulation’ skill.

He changed the settings so that it would only be broadcasted to

the area where the hippo was, and turned on the microphone.

“All guards. There is an abnormality in the drainage pipe today, and an inspection is scheduled. Please don’t use any water if you are in the building.”

He threw the bait, and now it was time to wait for a bite.

If things went as planned, he would be able to catch the hippo without anyone getting hurt.

---

Joo Hyun-ho was surprised as he arrived at the entrance of the aquarium. A familiar shadow stood in the area where his headlights shone.

Joo Hyun-ho parked his BMW and waved.

“Uh, Sun-bae!”

Cho Kang-suk replied with a face that showed he was tired of waiting.

“... You came. At least I don’t have to enter alone.”

“As expected of Sunbae. You thought of the same thing as me.”

Joo Hyun-ho explained why he came here and asked for Kang-suk's opinion.

“No, my detective senses just told me that this place was suspicious.”

“Hahaha...”

“At any rate, I don't think anyone else is coming. Let's go. By the way, did you send a request for support?”

“Yep.”

“If we catch him then I'll buy all of you dinner.”

“Hahaha! Then it needs to be a beef dinner.”

“Wah. There are 100 people. Furthermore, don't you eat a lot?”

“Well, I have a lot of money. That reminds me, there was a cute new girl in the traffic department earlier. Please introduce me.”

Hyun-ho said with a smirk. Even though he was going to arrest a murder suspect, he acted like he was going to an amusement park. Kang-suk made a disgusted expression and put Hyun-ho into a headlock.



“Cough! S-Sunbae! Spare me! By the way, what if the Hippo is in the aquarium right now?”

Kang-suk laughed and pointed to his waist.

There was a gun in a holster.

“I see.”

Hyun-ho raised a thumb.

The two men entered the dark aquarium. Then they stopped at a fork in the road.

“... What do we do?

H Aquarium was divided into area A and B. It was too wide to search through the whole thing.

“It can’t be helped. I’ll check the aquarium side. You will take the venues.”

“Yep. Should we use our phones?”

“Is that possible? My battery died so I ended up buying a portable charge from the convenience store to charge it.”

That's why Kang-suk stood at the entrance without going inside.

“Hahaha! I understand. Then I will contact you if I find the Hippo.”

“Yes. Please.”

Hyun-ho felt his heart beat faster. It had been almost seven years since he worked with Kang-suk.

“It is the return of the strong alliance after a long time.”

The two of them had won a program called Mafia Game. Whenever they teamed up, they would be called a strong alliance and would become an object of fear. The one who captured the criminal in the Mafia Game was always Kang-suk. Even after seven years, Hyun-ho was still dissatisfied with this. Thus, he decided to catch the Hippo by himself this time.

“Let's start the Hippo Hunt.”

Kang-suk hit Hyun-ho on the head.

“Hey. If you don't move then I will catch the Hippo.”

“Then I'm going to hunt.”

---

“Oooh!”

Jung Yuri’s temperature was going down due to the ice cold water. The current weather was cold, even when she wore clothes. She had been in cold water without any clothes for almost an hour now. It felt like she would freeze to death at any moment.

“Hu... “Hah...”

A narrow tube was in Jung Yuri’s mouth. It was her only lifeline since her entire body was covered in water. She could barely breathe using it.

“Oof!!”

But that was it. The kidnapper was probably blocking the tube at one minute intervals, preventing her from being able to breathe. The terrible thing was that the time intervals where he blocked the tube was different.

10 seconds. 40 seconds. 5 seconds. Sometimes it would be over a minute. At that time, her head would turn blank, and she really couldn’t think.

There was something even more terrible.

“Ohuhu...”

Someone was watching her suffer. They would often laugh at the sight.

She had goosebumps.

Jung Yuri was covered in water with her hands and feet bound together. She couldn't even scream out. She was going to be killed. She was going to be murdered by that man.

It happened just when she found the courage to walk alone. She had decided to live for her sister who died miserably, but all of that was now wasted.

Tears welled up in her eyes as she thought about it. However, she desperately fought to hold the tears back. If she cried, then it felt like she would be broken.

“Oof!”

Once again, her breathing was stopped. How long would it be this time? 30 seconds? One minute?

Or...

Jung Yuri was going crazy with fear at the thought of the death that would approach her at any moment.

‘Unni... Unni...’

However, she didn’t get the help that she hoped for.

“Puah!”

After 70 seconds, she was able to breathe again.

‘D-Die... This is really...’

It was at that moment. Jung Yuri heard the sound of a broadcast.

-All guards. There is an abnormality in the drainage pipe today, and an inspection is scheduled. Please don’t use water if you are in the building.

The man, who had been laughing, clicked his tongue.

“Sheesh. There are still people left? Well, I guess I have to kill them.”

Jung Yuri was blindfolded, but she realized that the man was looking at her. He was licking his lips.

Ddubeok ddubeok.

There was the sound of footsteps fading away.

‘Kill me now... I said to kill me!’

How many hours would he keep her alive? When she thought about it, the tears that she had endured came pouring out.

‘I’m sorry Unni... I’m really sorry.’

Had her sister felt like this when she was killed by Yoo Cheol-ho?

Ddubeok.

Ddubeok.

Once again, someone’s footsteps were heard. This time it was getting closer, not further away.

‘Did he already kill them? Then this time... Ah, p-please!’

The footsteps stopped. Then she felt someone touching her body in the water tank.

A soft touch. It didn’t feel the same.

Then she heard a different voice.

“C-Cough! I have no choice but to do this to pull you out. Don’t misunderstand me, I’m not touching because I want to.”

“Oof! Oof!”

“Ah, I’ll release the restraints.”

Jung Yuri realized that he was pulling off the restraints one by one.

Was she being rescued?

“E-Even taking off the clothes... Ah, I’m going crazy. I should’ve thought about bringing a towel.”

The unknown voice didn’t seem that old. At most, he was in his early 20s or so?

“Y-Yuri noona. I closed my eyes. I didn’t see Noona’s naked body!”

Why was the voice so familiar? Who was it?

Yuri slowly opened her eyes and looked at the man who saved her. Black hair and a leather jacket. One hand was holding a thick pipe.

Jung Yuri remembered where she had seen him before. The high school student who came to collect the bounty on Yoo Cheol-ho. He was unusually quick and clever for his age.

“S-Seo Tae-hyuk?”

“Have you recovered your spirit? P-Please wear this.”

Tae-hyuk took off his leather jacket and handed it to Yuri. He was unable to look straight at Jung Yuri due to her nakedness.

Yuri turned red the moment she realized that she was naked.

“H-how?”

She never imagined that he would come to her rescue.

Tae-hyuk was still looking away from her as he spoke.

“I captured Yoo Cheol-ho last time and got a reward. I felt a little sorry that I only received a few portions, so...”

“...?”

“This is the Hippo service.”



## Chapter 42 – The Hippo Hunt #2

---

“T-thank you...”

Jung Yuri accepted Tae-hyuk’s leather jacket and started to put it on. She wasn’t wearing any clothes besides the jacket she had just put on.

In the end, she wasn’t even wearing any underwear. She was quite tall for a woman so even with a jacket, parts of her body were still exposed. If she didn’t pull her clothes down with her hand, then her butt would be seen.

However, her upper body was more serious. Her chest was big enough to cause every man to take a second look. Thus, the buttons on the jacket could only be done up partway.

“Hah...”

A moan escaped from Jung Yuri’s pale white lips. She hugged herself to warm up her body even a little bit.

She looked so pathetic that Tae-hyuk felt strangely dizzy for a moment. Tae-hyuk stretched his hand out to Yuri and said.

“Don’t get me wrong. I’m not trying to touch your chest.”

“Uh... yes.”

Tae-hyuk exercised tremendous self-control as he turned his gaze away from the chest that was visible through the leather jacket.

When he touched Yuri's forehead, he could feel that it was as cold as ice.

“Haang!”

Yuri shrieked as Tae-hyuk's hand touched her forehead; however, she didn't resist.

‘Cold... Still, there doesn't seem to be any risk to her life. Once her body warms up...’

Severe hypothermia was a risk. The muscles of her body would be stiff and she would feel extreme fatigue.

“Wipe the water from your body.”

“Haang... Yes...”

Tae-hyuk looked around, but he couldn't find anything resembling a towel. In the end, he had to take off his t-shirt so that Yuri could have something to wipe her body down with.

“Hum hum. I do laundry everyday so it shouldn't smell of sweat.”

“... No. It seems good.”

Tae-hyuk looked at Yuri's complexion.

A red glow was starting to appear on the previously white face. Her body temperature was rising, but it was still dangerous.

“Can you get on my back? If we go to a concession stand, then there will be a heater. You can warm up there.

Yuri nodded.

Her lips were blue and her whole body was shaking. Occasional moans couldn't help emerging from her mouth. The first thing to do was to take her to a safe place, since her legs didn't work.

Tae-hyuk knelt down in a good posture. Yuri couldn't support her body properly and fell on his back. Tae-hyuk felt a heavy weight...

Mulkeong!

“Heok!”

There was something as soft as a marshmallow touching Tae-hyuk's back. Yuri relaxed her grip on the leather jacket and clung onto Tae-hyuk. In the end, her breasts were touching Tae-hyuk's

back.

‘C-Cold... But very soft... N-no! Wake up Seo Tae-hyuk!’

“Haaang...”

Tae-hyuk’s back was very warm, so a pleasant moan emerged from Yuri’s mouth. She was naked on the back of a man who she didn’t know well. She would’ve been terribly embarrassed if she was in her normal mental state.

However, was it due to the sense of relief from her survival? Jung Yuri couldn’t feel any shame. It was comfortable, as if she was on her father’s back.

Tae-hyuk was more embarrassed about being hugged from behind than Jung Yuri was embarrassed from being on his back. Her legs didn’t move, so he carefully held her thighs with both hands. The soft texture was conveyed directly. Strangely, she smelled good.

‘I-I don’t know who is doing a service for whom!’

Jung Yuri was 170 cm tall, a height that was similar to Tae-hyuk’s. It was harder than he thought to lift up Yuri.

‘But what if I use the Violence skill? I can do it with my stamina!’

Tae-hyuk used the Violence skill. Both hands were holding Jung Yuri's thighs, so he had to put the iron pipe in his mouth.

Tae-hyuk and Yuri headed to a concession stand. He had to stop once in awhile due to the sound of Yuri's breathing getting too close. Then he had to calm something excited down.

---

“I am a man. A man who is made for this job!”

Joo Hyun-ho hummed as he walked around the performance venue. Kang-suk was looking at the aquarium, while Joo Hyun-ho's task was to check this place. There was no one on the stage and in the audience seats. The only place left was the performer's waiting room. There was a bathtub where animals such as seals and penguins could be washed. If he were the Hippo, then he would commit the crime there.

Joo Hyun-ho was holding a handgun.

“I just picked up a gas gun. It isn't real like Sunbae's. Still, isn't it better than nothing?”

Joo Hyun-ho majored in criminology and psychology and became a profiler. However, in order to serve as an investigator, he completed two years of basic education at the police academy. He knew the perfect method to hold a gun. Furthermore, unlike his frail appearance, he was a master of judo.

“Bang bang! Haha! Isn’t this good?”

Joo Hyun-ho aimed towards an imaginary criminal. He didn’t seem like a genius investigator at this moment.

Hyun-ho released his finger from the trigger and spun the gas gun around.

“That’s enough playing. Then let’s start searching in earnest!”

He walked towards the place where the Hippo was hiding with a serious expression. As he arrived at the back of the performance venue, a door with STAFF ONLY appeared.

‘Here.’

Hyun-ho looked at the door with a serious expression and kicked it open with his foot.

Bam!

The closed door opened with a loud sound.

“Hands up! If you move then I will shoot!”

Hyun-ho knelt down and aimed the gun forward. Then he looked around.

“Sheesh. There is no one here.”

The room only contained a large fish tank, rope and buckets.

“Uh, wait a minute.”

Hyun-ho put the gun away and approached.

“Here... Someone was clearly just here.”

There wasn't anyone here. However, the evidence still remained. The fish tank was half filled with water. He checked it by hand and the water was ice cold.

“Let's think like Archimedes. The tank is half full. This means there was something in the water. Roughly...”

Hyun-ho calculated the volume of the tank and the amount that it was empty.

“.... It sound be one person who weighs around 50 kg.”

There was a lot of water on the floor. It meant that someone had pulled out another person from the fish tank.

Joo Hyun-ho looked around.

There were rope and several buckets filled with liquid. Hyun-ho checked the contents of the bucket.

“Milk, soy sauce and cooking oil...”

There was only a one metre long tube near the fish tank.

“I should be glad since my reasoning is correct. It is amazing, even if the culprit is gone.”

Hyun-ho touched the surface of the fish tank. Water was splattered from someone leaving the fish tank.

“This means the person was in here until recently.”

The surface of the fish tank was smooth. Even if the water splashed, it would flow down to the ground after 10 minutes.

Joo Hyun-ho swallowed his saliva.

“... This is the Hippo’s workshop.”

And the Hippo was gone. His victim was inside the fish tank.

“Has he killed her already?”



It couldn't be. The liquids used for the murder were still inside the buckets.

This meant...

Joo Hyun-hos face turned white.

“... Sunbae is in danger!”

---

Cho Kang-suk stood in the dark aquarium. Whether it was from tiredness due to the continuous overtime, Kang-suk's face was stiff, as if he were a wax doll.

Then someone approached him. Cho Kang-suk felt it and turned around quickly. It was someone that Cho Kang-suk knew.

“Ah. Kim Jong-wook? Have you come to catch the hippo?”

Kim Jong-wook was a police officer working in the jurisdiction. Whenever a murder took place in the area, he was a cop who would take turns guarding the crime scene. Kim Jong-wook was responsible for the bathroom where the hippo committed his second murder. The location wasn't far from here. It seemed he rushed here after hearing the request for reinforcements.

Jong-wook yelled with a pleasantly surprised face.

“Ah Detective Cho Kang-suk! What’s going on here? The hippo...”

Cho Kang-suk replied.

“I received a tip that the hippo was here so I came to check. It’s been a bust so far, as there’s nobody here. Ah, I need to catch the hippo as quickly as possible. This whole day seems to be all a waste.”

Kang-suk’s face was covered with a dark shadow.

“Haha, indeed. I ran here after suddenly receiving an order.”

“Kim Jong-wook should take a break.”

“Haha! Isn’t this our job?”

Cho Kang-suk stared at Kim Jong-wook with a blank expression.

He was dressed in civilian clothes. He had one hand in his pocket, and his pants were all wet.

“Was it raining outside? Your clothes...”

Jong-wook gave a deep sigh.

“Aigoo. It just suddenly rained. Did you bring an umbrella?”

Kang-suk sighed.

“I didn’t bring one. When I leave then I’ll just use a newspaper. I’d like to call a taxi, but I can’t. You should know. The salary of a detective is poor.”

“It seems so. You must have suffered.”

“Anyway, I think that the tip is likely to be a joke. Then, I will look around the performance venue. Do you want to come?”

Jong-wook nodded.

“That seems best. By the way, are you alone?”

Cho Kang-suk paused for a moment before asking in surprise.

“Why do you ask?”

Jong-wook slowly approached Kang-suk and laughed.

“That is...”

The two of them were now close enough to touch if he stretched out his hand. Jong-wook's mouth twisted oddly. There was a sharp knife in his hand.

“I need to know how many people I have to kill!”

Jong-wook stepped forward and plunged the knife into Kang-suk's chest.

Puok!

“Keok!”

Kang-suk screamed.

The attack was so unexpected that there was no resistance at all. He instantly fell down.

Jong-wook giggled like he was enjoying the scene and said,

“Ohuhu... I wonder how you knew I was here. Will you listen to me before dying? Huh? Detective Cho Kang-suk. Please say something. Uhahahaha! That's correct. I am the Hippo.”

Jong-wook... No, the hippo grinned brutally as he twisted the knife stuck in Kang-suk's chest.

## Chapter 43 – The Hippo Hunt #3

---

“So what?”

Cho Kang-suk’s voice rang out in the darkness.

Kim Jong-wook’s eyes widened in shock, and was unable to understand what was happening right now. Kang-suk, whom he stabbed in the heart, was still alive and talking. Was this an illusion or something? Maybe this was...

“There is no magic that moves the dead.”

Kim Jong-wook looked at his right hand that was still holding the knife. It had obviously been stuck in Cho Kang-suk’s chest.

“Perhaps a bulletproof vest... No, I definitely pierced his chest!”

Jong-wook had felt it through his fingers. The knife had clearly pierced his target’s heart. The evidence was that a red liquid had emerged from Kang-suk’s chest. His hands were sticky with blood, but there was plenty of water to wash it off.

Jong-wook didn’t like using knives, as it caused the other person to die too quickly. He couldn’t feel the ecstasy, the rush of watching the person die. Therefore, he avoided killing with a knife as much as possible.

It was the same feeling garnered from eating delicious food all at once. The best delicacies were those that were enjoyed very slowly. But this time, it couldn't be helped.

Jong-wook's opponent wasn't an herbivore that he normally preyed on. It was a beast with sharp teeth and claws. If he didn't kill the other person first then he would be in danger. Therefore, he had stabbed the other person when they were off guard.

Yet he didn't die. He was alive and taunting Jong-wook. Jong-wook got goosebumps.

Kang-suk continued speaking with a knife in his heart.

"The hippo's prey are all vibrant women in their 20s. The stronger the will to live, the better the prey. You think that Jung Yuri is the best delicacy. She took on her sister's role and moved with her strength. She is currently in the most brilliant moment of her life."

"Uh, how are my though-...!"

"Well, I know why you approached Jung Yuri. The first time you met her, she was the family member of one of Yoo Cheol-ho's victims and you were a cop in the precinct. Jung Yuri was like a living corpse at the time though, so you didn't choose her as prey.

"....."

Jong-wook's eyes widened as he listened to Kang-suk's reasoning. It was surprising. It seemed like Kang-suk was looking into his heart.

“Then you met her again. You were fortunate when Cho Kang-suk caught Yoo Cheol-ho. You went along with him as a representative of the jurisdiction. In the few months since you saw her, Jung Yuri had completely changed. It was like a tree sprouting. Don't you think?”

“... Y-You! What the hell is this?”

“At that moment, the monster called the Hippo, who was sleeping in Kim Jong-wook's heart, opened his eyes. You were filled with a constant desire to kill Jung Yuri. However, it wasn't easy. She is the daughter of the vice president of a large corporation, after all. There were even secret body guards. So you first killed other victims while aiming for her. Eventually, you got what you wanted. This is my reasoning. How is it? Isn't it accurate?”

Jong-wook grit his teeth and said.

“You, you're not Cho Kang-suk!”

“Ahaha. That is the right answer.”

Kang-suk replied with an expression that was still blank. No, he hadn't made any expression from the beginning.

Jong-wook tried to withdraw the knife from Kang-suk's chest, but couldn't.

“W-What the?”

What he thought was blood was actually sticky glue. Jong-wook's hand was stuck to Kang-suk. Jong-wook hit Kang-suk's body with his free left arm.

Bam! Bam bam!

However, it was like beating a sandbag. When he hit Kang-suk's face with all his strength, the eyeballs popped out. After a few more hits, the head spun around. However, Kang-suk was still laughing.

Jong-wook finally realized what was going on.

“What, this? A doll!”

It was a very elaborately crafted wax doll. In the aquarium, all lights were turned off except for dim lighting. Thus, he failed to realize that the other person wasn't a human.

“... This, my... you know...”

The microphone of the phone was damaged by Jong-wook's



attack, and Kang-suk's voice started to be cut off.

“F-fuuuuuck! What is this?”

Jong-wook roared wildly. However, his right arm was still stuck to the wax doll. After a few more hits, the annoying voice was no longer heard. The doll was completely quiet.

“... Aigoo, I lost my phone. That cost one million won, and I don't even have a job. A new one... Maybe I should charge Yuri noona for the expenses?”

Instead, the grumbling voice of Cho Kang-suk started to approach in the darkness.

“Aaaagh!”

Jong-wook frantically thrashed about, but he was stuck due to the glue and couldn't get away from the doll.

Cho Kang-suk said.

“Ah, you should be careful. If you make a mistake then you might peel off your skin.”

Jong-wook looked in the direction that the voice was heard. He saw a high school student wearing a wet t-shirt and an iron pipe in his right hand. He was holding something like a walkie-talkie in

his other hand. It seemed to have transmitted his voice through the smartphone that he placed inside the doll.

“W-What the hell is this?”

Kang-suk... No, Seo Tae-hyuk, who acted as Kang-suk using the Voice Modulation skill, replied.

“Hello Hippo. Is this our first face to face meeting? There’s no need to know who I am. Just think of me as someone who doesn’t like you.

Jong-wook yelled.

“I-I won’t let his go! I will kill you!”

“You remind me of a young brat from my past.”

Tae-hyuk ran to Jong-wook and wielded his iron pipe.

---

Tae-hyuk was lucky.

His first plan was to draw a picture to lure the Hippo. However, he still felt anxious. His opponent wasn’t simple. He was a serial killer who murdered several people. That’s why it was necessary to prepare a better trap. If he missed even a 0.0001% chance, then

someone might be victimized.

Then he received a message that he got one affinity point, due to the birth of a new relationship after saving Jung Yuri.

Tae-hyuk pondered on how it could be used as effectively as possible. He could strengthen his crime skills using the affinity points, but he still didn't have enough points to do that right now.

In the end, he decided to try the Instant Enhancement on the second tab of the skills page. It consumed one affinity point to give a temporary effect.

Tae-hyuk found a large amount of wax candles prepared for a later performance in the warehouse. He made a crude doll of Cho Kang-suk using it. The result was beyond what he expected from the Forgery skill.

A special feature was produced, due to the added affinity point. It wasn't possible to make big movements, but the doll could move like a person. He put the smartphone inside and could talk through it.

It was unreasonable to give an expression to the doll with just one affinity point. It was stated that 10 points were required to create a doll with personality. Of course, that there was just like reaching for a pie in the sky.

Still, it was good enough for hooking the Hippo. He put a large

amount of glue inside the doll. A device was installed so that if the throat or heart were ever pierced, the glue would spurt out.

There were a few risky moments. But as he thought, he could completely limit the behaviour of the Hippo. Now the Hippo was literally a punching bag.

“Keook!”

Jong-wook moaned as he was hit by Tae-hyuk’s iron pipe. He bent over at the waist. He used his left arm to guard his weak points, but there was a limit.

Bbuduk!

In the end, Jong-wook’s left arm was broken.

“Eh? You are still fine. Well, I should do successive hits...”

Tae-hyuk swung the iron pipe at Jong-wook again. It made a cheerful sound in the air.

“Kuak! Ugh! Eek! W-wait a minute!”

“Why? Again.”

The Hippo bent over again due to the pipe.

“I-I lost. Hand me over to the police if you want! But do you want to know why a police officer became a murderer?”

“Hrmm.”

Jong-wook started to talk about how the hippo was born.

“When I was in high school...”

“Did I ask? Let’s keep going.”

“Cough!”

Tae-hyuk wasn’t curious about what he would say and just kept on quietly doing his work. In the end, he lost consciousness after a few more minutes of being beaten by the iron pipe.

“.....”

Tae-hyuk threw the iron pipe on the ground.

Clink!

After a while, the iron pipe disappeared. It was a complete crime. This was the end.

“Once a serial killer is caught, they always tell the same story. He was abused as a child. The lack of affection... I’ve seen a lot of people like that. So I came to one conclusion. A madman is just crazy. Is that a story? Absolutely ridiculous.”

Tae-hyuk stripped off the clothes on the doll of Kang-suk. Then he tied up the hippo.

“So let’s give an anonymous tip to Kang-suk hyung. Good night, Hippo.”

Tae-hyuk pulled out a bag containing the SD card with the video of the hippo’s crime and put it in the hippo’s mouth.

“... Should this be sufficient for a promotion? If Hyung wants to marry Noona then you should at least be an investigator.”

Tae-hyuk disappeared into the darkness.

---

“A-are you alright?”

After exiting to find Kang-suk, Joo Hyun-ho discovered a half-naked woman in a concession stand. She was Jung Yuri, the victim.

Hyun-ho took off his trench coat and covered Yuri with it.

“... Yes. Although it is freezing cold, my body is warm due to the heater. I can bear with it.”

Jung Yuri explained how she was grabbed in a calm voice.

“As expected, the hippo is here... Still, I’m glad that you are okay. I will call an ambulance once away.”

“Yes... Please.”

“Detective Cho Kang-suk is here. I will immediately contact him to arrest the hippo...”

“The hippo is probably already caught.”

“Huh? That...”

Jung Yuri raised a finger to her lips and said.

“I’m sorry. I’ve decided to keep the details a secret.”

Jung Yuri smiled as she recalled the man who saved her.

## Chapter 44 – The Hippo Hunt #4

---

“Pant... Pant...”

Kang-suk was running through the dimly lit aquarium. Something was strange about this place. It took him more than five minutes to run to the other side, yet the path had yet to end.

“... What? Wasn’t this here earlier?”

Kang-suk was breathing roughly. After running around for a while, he realized that he had returned to his original place. There was clearly only one path among the tanks. He felt like a rat trapped in a maze.

While this was happening, the hippo might be killing another innocent victim. Kang-suk took a deep breath and started running towards the other side of the aquarium again. Colorful fish were swimming in the tanks. However, Kang-suk couldn’t afford to think about it.

“... Here again!”

There was a dreamlike coral reef tank in front of Kang-suk. He had once again returned to the starting point. He had to get out of this aquarium. But when he tried to go to the opposite passage, some mysterious power sent Kang-suk back to the origin.

“Is this the hall of the nine-tailed fox?”



Kang-suk suddenly recalled the old story about the nine-tailed fox. As someone walked through a dark mountain trail, a beauty appeared. The man followed her deeper into the mountain. By the time he recovered his spirit, he was standing in front of a deep cliff.

This situation was just like this.

‘It can’t be...’

Kang-suk shook his head. It was unlikely that this was the same as the legend. He was probably overthinking it. Now he had to just think about going through the aquarium that had become a maze. At that time, he heard a rustling sound.

“Uh, is this the sound of paper?”

It was coming from the other side of the aisle. It was a place that wasn’t blocked by the maze.

“There is someone in here!”

Kang-suk clenched his teeth and ran. The maze wasn’t the problem.

He just couldn’t delay any longer.

“Do you think this maze will stop me!”

Kang-suk decided to go to the other side of the aquarium, even if he had to smash through something. His senses were telling him that the hippo was there. In the end, there were around 10 incidents of vandalism. How many months salary would that be?

But there was no need to do so.

“Uh...”

Kang-suk stopped moving. There was definitely a large tropical fish tank. However, it was still far away. He could also see someone collapsed on the far side.

“... Is this the real hall of the nine-tailed fox?”

Kang-suk pulled out the handgun that was hanging from his waist. He loaded it so that he could fire at any time.

The first round was a blank. But from the second round, there were real bullets. He was prepared to fire if he met the hippo.

“First of all, I will aim at his feet... Maybe I should accidentally miss? The groin...”

Kang-suk took a deep breath and stepped forward. He had worked for seven years in the field, but his fingers were shaking at

this moment. The aquarium was dark so he couldn't tell who the other person was until he got close.

A person tied up with clothes... The shadow was familiar. Kang-suk ran forward without thinking and confirmed the man's face.

“K-Kim Jong-wook...!”

Why was he collapsed here?

Kang-suk could only think of one possibility.

“... Is he here to catch the hippo?!”

Kang-suk recalled that Joo Hyun-ho had asked for assistance from the police nearby. There was a high chance that Kim Jong-wook had come here to catch the hippo. First, he had to check if Jong-wook was alive. Kang-suk touched a finger to Jong-wook's neck.

He found a vein and looked for a pulse.

“A-Alive! Eh?”

He turned Jong-wook's forehead and revealed something that had previously been hidden. There was something written on it. It was written with felt tip pen, and his forehead was sweaty so it was hard to read at first. But once he concentrated, he thought he could

read the letters.

Kang-suk slowly read each character out loud.

“... This, bastard, H, hippo?”

Then there was a long arrow pointing to the mouth.

“It means there is something in his mouth.”

Kang-suk opened Jong-wook’s mouth and checked for what was inside. Jong-wook was completely unconscious so there were no signs of his eyes opening.

“SD card?”

Everything would become clear once he checked the contents. Kang-suk pulled out his phone and tried to call Hyun-ho. By the way, there were a lot of missed calls.

“Eh? That Hyun-ho brat. He called me a lot.”

He had forgotten that it was on vibrate and hadn’t realized that there were calls.

“Aigoo... He will be very angry.”

Kang-suk sighed, entered Hyun-ho's number, and pressed the call button.

Dururu.

The signal connection and Hyun-ho's excited voice was heard.

–Sunbae! Why are you only calling me now! Right here...

“Stop nagging. Come to the aquarium. I think I caught the hippo.”

–Huh?

Kang-suk hung up and looked up at the ceiling.

Something extraordinary had happened while he was wandering in the maze. Had the nine-tailed fox really appeared here?

Kang-suk couldn't understand it.

---

“Hrmm so this is how he slowly killed his victims.”

“Oh! Son of a bitch!”

Kang-suk cursed as he watched the video on the SD card. Kim Jong-wook had trapped the woman inside the tank and tortured her.

Hyun-ho found the scene of the hippo killing someone very interesting.

“Kim Jong-wook is the hippo.”

The SD card was undeniable proof. Kang-suk narrowed his eyes as he glared.

“Hyun-ho. Can I hit him once? It will be fine if you pretend not to see anything.”

“Hold on, your hands will get dirty.”

“That bastard brutally...”

Kang-suk couldn't stand his anger and made a fist. There was a loud sound as his joints cracked.

“Fortunately, the video was cut off in the middle. Perhaps the victim is still alive?”

“Yes. I found her and called an ambulance. She has hypothermia. However, there appears to be no risk to her life.”

“Well done!”

Hyun-ho suddenly recalled something as he stared at the video and said.

“Ah, Sunbae. I figured out why he used salt water.”

“A-All of a sudden...? We caught the culprit so it is all over. We just need to write up a report.”

He didn't want to hear any more horrible stories.

“Aren't you curious as to why he used salt water?”

“Hrm.”

Kang-suk didn't answer.

Hyun-ho started talking on his own.

“It turned out to be simple. People drink water to maintain the concentration of ingredients in the blood, such as sodium. On the other hand, if they drink too much water, then the kidneys can't handle it properly. The concentration of components in the blood will become very thin. This osmotic phenomenon will cause the body's cells to absorb the moisture and swell up. Then the organs and brain will fail!”

“Fuck. What does that mean? What?”

Kang-suk rubbed his knuckles against Hyun-ho’s head. Hyun-ho laughed and continued.

“In order to feed the person as much water as possible, he needs to feed them salt water in order to maintain the body’s salinity. A large amount isn’t needed. It’s why the coroner couldn’t find the salt. The blood maintained the same salinity so he couldn’t find anything suspicious. It is because the hippo wanted to feed them to drink as much water as possible.”

“Crazy bastard...”

Kang-suk spat on the floor. He felt like he wouldn’t be able to drink water in a while.

“Then... Who caught the hippo? Isn’t it the same person who saved the victim?”

Kang-suk questioned.

First, he had to deal with the hippo who had been placed in the corridor.

“Anyway, let’s call the investigation headquarters. What would the inspector say after hearing that the hippo was finally arrested?”



“Won’t he look like a boiled octopus?”

“.....”

“Sunbae, you just imagined it!”

Joo Hyun-ho held his belly and laughed. Kang-suk sighed. Even if he was skilled, Hyun-ho was too frivolous.

“But what do we report about how the hippo was caught?”

“Cough. That’s right. I’m going to report that something struck the hippo and suddenly disappeared.”

“But who are they? They realized the identity of the hippo before the Sunbae and I did. He was caught in a way I never imagined. Maybe he is the God of Investigation?”

Kang-suk slowly thought about the person. No matter how he looked at the evidence, he couldn’t tell who it was.

Then he said.

“No, he isn’t the God of Investigation. The video taken on the SD card was from a hidden camera. Also, look at the state of the hippo. He wasn’t caught in a legitimate way.”

“That’s right.”

“Ah, I’d rather call him something else.”

“Well, did you think of a better nickname?”

“... God of Crime.”

“Puhaha! Sunbae! Have you been reading too much manhwa?”

Joo Hyun-ho chuckled again.

Kang-suk responded with a red face.

“God of Investigation isn’t the same?”

20 minutes after reporting, they heard the sound of sirens. Kang-suk and Hyun-ho’s work was over.

Inspector Kim Do-shik rushed into the aquarium. His eyes shone as he heard that they caught the hippo. In particular, his face turned red after hearing that the hippo’s identity was a policeman. Kim Do-shik was more agitated than usual as he tried to calm his excitement.

“Hahaha! Detective Cho! Investigator Joo! I knew the two of you

could pull it off! Well done! Bravo! Hooray for Detective Cho! I'll make sure to tell the chief that Detective Cho resolved this case!"

"Ah, thank you. Still, the criminal is a police officer..."

"Well, the media doesn't have to know. We can handle this quietly. You have suffered a lot in the meantime. Take a rest for the next few days."

"Yes. I understand."

The incident was resolved, but there was a bitter aftertaste.

Hyun-ho, who had been watching Kim Jong-wook, approached Kang-suk.

"Sunbae. I want to talk to you for a bit."

"Eh? Really? Inspector. I'm sorry but..."

"Uh, go!"

Kang-suk followed Hyun-ho to another place. Once they arrived in a place with no one present, Hyun-ho opened his mouth.

"The hippo gained consciousness, but his words are a bit strange."

“What did he say?”

“A person who didn’t die when stabbed with a knife. Changing the voice at will. An iron pipe appearing out of thin air. What the hell is that? The contents are really strange.”

“Perhaps...”

It was all ridiculous. If all of that was possible...

“The person who caught the hippo would truly be the God of Crime, Sunbae.”

---

Tae-hyuk was watching the police from a place far from the aquarium. With this, Cho Kang-suk would receive tremendous acclaim as the one who arrested the hippo. As the identity of the hippo was a police offer, it wouldn’t be known to the mass media but it was certain that he would get a promotion.

Tae-hyuk was reminded of his sister Seo Ha-ran. She became the head of the family at a young age. She gave up her dreams to take care of her family. Rather than love, she had to do the housework on the weekend. He wanted to find a good partner for such a sister. He would do anything to see the two people living happily.

In order to do that, Kang-suk’s status should rise a little more.

Simply catching criminals in the field was insufficient.

Principal investigator... No, shouldn't he at least be a police commissioner?

Tae-hyuk laughed. That seemed too far in the future.

“Shouldn't they go on their first date first? Ahu. How can I turn the bear into a gentlemen?”

Kang-suk's dating plan was created in Tae-hyuk's mind.

Brr!

At the same time, a vibration was heard in two places. Tae-hyuk checked the Demon Revealing Mirror first.

“Oh, 10 affinity points! A-Amazing!”

He acquired 10 affinity points all at once. Tae-hyuk grinned from ear to ear. With this, he would be able to strengthen two skills.

“Then the phone...”

The smartphone was cracked due to the hippo's strikes. Still, it was possible to receive calls.

“Hello?”

-Uh, Tae-hyuk. Sorry for calling you late at night. It is Mama.

The caller was Big Mama. Tae-hyuk lowered his voice.

“... Did something happen?”

-This is about your commission from the other day. The results are out. But it is a little strange so I called to deliver the results right away.

Tae-hyuk had commissioned information from Big Mama three weeks ago.

It was about Park Jung-hwan, whose death Tae-hyuk was framed for. Then he found out that Park Jung-hwan was prying into Tae-hyuk. It was strange. So he wanted to find out where Park Jung-hwan was and check it out for himself.

What was the reason? He felt like there was a huge hidden conspiracy. Therefore, he had given 10 million won to Big Mama to find Park Jung-hwan's whereabouts.

It took a bit long but the results had now come out.

“... Where is Park Jung-hwan now?”

–He is dead.

“Huh?”

–It occurred two years ago...

Tae-hyuk dropped his phone.

Park Jung-hwan was dead? He was framed four years later for killing Park Jung-hwan. But now he was already dead?! It was also two years ago? What the hell was this?!

Then who was digging for information on Tae-hyuk? It had clearly been Park Jung-hwan.

Tae-hyuk stared at the sky with a bemused expression. The truth, which he thought would be uncovered to a certain extent, just got further away.

# Chapter 45 – The Family's Condition #1

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Tae-hyuk took out the Demon Revealing Mirror in front of Big Mama's pawn shop.

He felt tense whenever he had to meet her. Tae-hyuk checked his abilities every time he came here. He needed to know what he could do, and where it was possible. That way, he would have confidence while dealing with Big Mama.

After the Rosario incident, their relationship had become a type of partnership. However, he always had to be ready for any type of deception coming his way.

‘Then first, the crime skills...’

He tapped on the Demon Revealing Mirror and pulled up his current learned crime skills. Robbery, Spying, Voice Modulation, Forgery, Gambling, and Violence – all of these made up for a total of six skills. He also had 10 affinity points that could be used to strengthen those skills. Every one of them had a type of charm.

‘I'd like to raise them but I'll save them, since I don't know what I will need.’

Next, he confirmed his stats.

Stats: Stamina (59), Intelligence (47), Agility (24), Dexterity



Tae-hyuk had used the Forgery skill quite a lot during the Hippo case. He also consumed an affinity point for a temporary special ability. His dexterity had gone up by five points. Three of his stats were close to the condition necessary for the upgrade. In the near future, he would be able to reach the second rank 'Noble.' As a Commoner, there were a lot of restraints on his abilities, so he wanted to reach the next rank sooner.

'It is difficult with the abilities I currently possess'

Last night, Tae-hyuk had fought against the Hippo, and had to mobilize everything he had in order to win. The Hippo was a crazy guy, but just based on strength, he wasn't the strongest on the blacklist.

Among the criminals he would meet in the future, there were those with superhuman abilities, or those who used bombs to kill hundreds of people. In addition, a pseudo-cult with thousands of followers.

Tae-hyuk would soon meet them. Prior to that, he should at least upgrade to the Noble rank.

'I don't know how much stronger a Noble is, but it should still be better than my current rank.'

Currently, he had met six people on the blacklist. Oddly, the counter raised, despite not causing Moonlight Flower and Big Mama to be arrested.

In the case of the Moonlight Flower, he caught Kim Sang-hyun. And after receiving Rosario from Big Mama, a notification had popped up on the Demon Revealing Mirror. It seemed like catching them wasn't the only condition.

‘Anyway, there are 14 people left!’

To do that, he needed to maintain his close relationship with Big Mama. Anyway, the important thing was to find out about Park Jung-hwan's death. Big Mama raised dozens of snakes in her belly. It was dangerous to believe everything she said.

“... Anyway, today I should clearly find out.”

Tae-hyuk firmly opened the door of the pawn shop.

“Omo. It is Tae-hyuk. Did you come for the part time job?”

Big Mama looked up and asked. Tae-hyuk's mouth twitched.

‘Saying this after making such a bombshell announcement... Ohh. Indeed, a scary woman!’

“Let's continue the conversation from yesterday. I want you to

give me the proper information about Park Jung-hwan.”

It was reasonable to ask after paying the information fee.

“Ohoho. Of course I’ve prepared it.”

Big Mama went into a room in her store and came out with a paper envelope.

“Read it.”

Tae-hyuk accepted it and confirmed the contents. It contained everything about Park Jung-hwan: Where he was born, what school he went to, his school marks, the names of his close friends, and even the university clubs that he joined. It was miraculous how Big Mama managed to investigate so much.

“It is a bit later than promised. I’m sorry so I arranged the important parts as a special service. Do you want to hear it?”

“Yes.”

“Park Jung-hwan is a native of Gangwon-do. A so-called self made person. As you can see from the materials I prepared, he studied well and exercised hard. He was popular due to his bright personality. This style is called...”

“Mother’s friend’s son?”

“Yes. He is literally the perfect image of that type. However, Park Jung-hwan had one unusual characteristic. Listen to this.”

Inside the envelope was a tape recorder. Tae-hyuk put the earphone into his ear and pressed the switch. Then he heard a conversation over a lot of noise. It was a conversation between a man with a deep voice and a middle-aged person.

-Can you tell me more about the habit of Park Jung-hwan that you mentioned before?

-...Yes. Jung-hwan has a habit. It can be called a type of tick? The sides of his mouth twitches when talking... Strangely, the habit doesn't happen on test days or election days. Then the next day, it will occur several times in one minute...

Big Mama said.

“Listen to the next track.”

Tae-hyuk manipulated the tape recorder and fast forwarded through the conversation. This time, it was a conversation between the man with the deep voice and an elderly person.

-What do you mean, Park Jung-hwan often forgets things?

-So... He is very good at what he does. But after a few days, when

I asked him about it again, he completely forgot what happened. He is already forgetful at such a young age. Ah, but his brain is truly great. He never missed being on top at school.

Tae-hyuk looked at Big Mama after listening.

“Those are interviews about Park Jung-hwan.”

“Yes. All of them have known him since high school. I became aware of a shocking fact. That is... Do I need to say it?”

“Two years ago, Park Jung-hwan died.”

“Yes. I learned of this fact by chance.”

“What exactly happened?”

Big Mama laughed and raised a finger.

“Tae-hyuk. Sorry, but the investigation is up to here. That was exactly 10 million won. If you want to know more, you have to pay extra.”

Tae-hyuk's eyes twitched. He had to pay more money if he wanted to know? This wasn't a three part porn ad, it was too much. Unfortunately, Tae-hyuk needed to know.

“... So how much more do I need to pay?”

“This is enough.”

Big Mama emphasized the one finger that she had raised.

“Ten million won. Yes, I understand.”

Tae-hyuk sighed.

He was glad that he had enough money saved. Although it was a large amount of money, Big Mama’s investigative abilities were worth it. In addition, the future report would certainly be beyond imagination.

“You set the limit too low. It is 100 million.”

“Huh? 100 million?”

“Think of it as the information having that much value. Right?”

Tae-hyuk narrowed his eyes.

Big Mama had really great insight. The information about Park Jung-hwan had to be obtained, even if he needed to pay a lot of money.

“I’m sorry, but I’ve spent the 100 million I received with Rosario.”

“Hoh. But you made some money from SY.”

Big Mama knew about it. However, he couldn’t do that. It was the money for Ha-ran. He couldn’t touch it.

“You will have to wait a bit for the money.”

Big Mama said with a soft smile.

“If I don’t receive the money, then there is no investigation. You should be aware of that.”

‘That old lioness... !’

Tae-hyuk’s expression distorted.

No matter what, he needed the information about Park Jung-hwan. However, she might not give all the remaining information even after receiving 100 million. Unlike the Rosario incident, this time Tae-hyuk was caught on Big Mama’s rod.

Thus, Tae-hyuk decided to use a trump card.

“... By the way, let me ask you one thing. Is there any counterfeit

artwork that you need?”

Big Mama nodded with a warm smile.

---

Kang-suk, who was sitting on the table, had a comfortable expression after a long time. Tae-hyuk asked from where he was sitting on the opposite side.

“It has been a long time since you came to dinner. Have you missed Noona?”

Kang-suk was startled and quickly replied.

“I came to see you!”

“Yes, yes.”

Tae-hyuk nodded with a convinced expression.

“I was super busy with an awful case. Somehow it was solved. I have some time to rest.”

“I don’t know what happened. Well, I’m glad that you did well.”

“Yes. In fact, I didn’t do anything. It is a little awkward since it



somehow became my achievement. Tomorrow, I will formally report to the higher ups.”

Kang-suk’s expression was serious.

At that moment, Tae-hyuk felt a knot in his chest. It was a serial murderer case with two bodies and one victim. Solving it would be a big achievement for a detective. However, Kang-suk was trying to kick it away with his own feet.

‘Ah, that person! It is the dinner I worked hard to prepare for him. Why is he going to spit it out! He is so upright that he is damaging himself!’

Kang-suk was truly a very nice person. However, such a person would only receive loss in the world. It seemed like Tae-hyuk would have to do some work behind Kang-suk.

Tae-hyuk spoke cautiously so that he wouldn’t be heard by Haran who was cooking in the kitchen.

“At any rate, is now the time? When are you going to ask for a date?”

“D-D-Date! C-Cough! We are just going to play...”

Tae-hyuk sighed. It seemed like he wouldn’t be able to ask for a date until he was an old man. In the end, Tae-hyuk acted.

“Noona! Kang-suk hyung wants you to hang out with him this weekend!”

“Ya, ya, hey!”

Kang-suk was embarrassed but Ha-ran looked at him with an expression of astonishment. Then she looked at Kang-suk like she was waiting for something. In the end, Kang-suk surrendered and asked Ha-ran to go out.

“Uh, ugh... That’s correct. Ha-ran. Do you have time to go somewhere with me this weekend?”

Ha-ran clapped with pleasure.

“Wah...! Hang out together? Then I’ll prepare a lunch box!”

Tae-hyuk sighed as he glanced at Ha-ran and Kang-suk.

It was their first date since first meeting each other three months ago. How long would it take for them to become a couple?

Maybe he should help them a little bit.

---

The Hippo incident passed in a flash.

Tae-hyuk lay down on his desk in the classroom and groaned.

“... I need to make some money. I also need to support Kang-suk hyung. Ohh. Should I just skip school?”

An Eun-young heard Tae-hyuk's complaints from her seat next to him.

“T-Tae-hyuk... You can't skip school. Go home after school finishes.”

“Ugh. Did you hear?”

An Eun-young said with a serious voice.

“Next week is the final exams. Have you prepared well?”

“.....”

Tae-hyuk stared dumbly.

Recently, he had been so busy that he didn't care about studying. The proof was that his intelligence stat hadn't risen.

“I guess not. You did seem strangely busy... If you take the test properly, didn't you say that you would be first in the school?”

“Hahaha...”

“Well, I can give you special lessons again this time...”

An Eun-young was strangely hesitant.

It seemed like there was something she wanted to say.

“Is there something?”

“Ah, no. Let’s study together like last time. Will you come to my house this weekend?”

Tae-hyuk realized that An Eun-young was asking for help.

“Eun-young. Is something going on? If you don’t mind then I am willing to listen to your story.”

An Eun-young looked at Tae-hyuk with deeply touched eyes. Then she slowly explained the situation.

“T-Tae-hyuk... That... You know...”

An Eun-young had an older sister.

However, she recently got involved in a multi-level scheme and ran away from home.

Tae-hyuk was troubled after hearing the story. His head was about to burst just from his own matters. But now he needed to help An Eun-young's family matters as well? What benefits would there be?

“.....”

Tae-hyuk bit his lip.

He realized that he always made calculations before moving. It was the same with Big Mama. When he used the crime skill, he had the mindset of a criminal.

He had received enormous help from An Eun-young. Thanks to her studying skill, he could tremendously increase his intelligence stat. He could finally become a model student.

An Eun-young was now asking for help. How could he refuse just because there were no benefits?

Tae-hyuk thought for a moment. He was currently ranked third. Until he went to university, he needed An Eun-young's studying skill. If he helped her now then he could use her studying skills in the future. He was moving for An Eun-young's studying skill.

Tae-hyuk came to this conclusion and said to An Eun-young.

“If you don’t mind then I will help you. Let’s talk about the details in your room.”

“Uh, yes... T-Thank you, Tae-hyuk.”

An Eun-young was sincerely thankful. At that moment, Tae-hyuk felt something like a needle stabbing into his chest.

‘Then there are three things that need to be solved. I’ll be quite busy in the future.’

Tae-hyuk quietly looked at An Eun-young’s face. He was really glad to see her smiling expression.

## Chapter 46 – The Family's Condition #2

---

After eating An Eun-young's stamina food, Tae-hyuk looked around the house.

‘It's a little strange that there's nobody at home when we're studying together.’

Tae-hyuk had studied at An Eun-young's house for a month now. However, he had never met her family even once.

‘Was her father the director of a general hospital? Her mother is also at the hospital for treatment.’

She said that her father only came home around once a week. He understood why the two people weren't visible. But the problem was her older sister.

‘Runaway...’

Tae-hyuk quietly looked at An Eun-young's face. She talked casually, but he could see the deep darkness within her eyes.

“Eun-jeong unni doesn't get along with my father. She isn't interested in studying, and goes out to play every day. Therefore, he forced her to enter a boarding school. That was the beginning of the incident.”

Tae-hyuk sensed something and asked in a small voice.

“Did your sister go to L high school?”

“Yes. It is a prestigious school with a high placement rate.”

“And your sister is 25 years old this year?”

“T-that’s right. How did you know?”

Tae-hyuk closed his mouth. He hadn’t thought there would be a relationship like this.

He had memories of the next 14 years. Most of his memories were about criminals and the prison. Then there was the moment when he was about to receive the death penalty.

The problem was the day before the death penalty. At that time, he had met something that wasn’t human. It had gaping holes for eyes and a mouth that was ripped up to the ears. Whenever it laughed, red blood dripped down its face. In the end, Tae-hyuk didn’t know who it was. He just remembered that he had made a deal with it.

It had talked about the deaths of Ha-ran and Tae-min. Seo Tae-min had become a lawyer to save Tae-hyuk, but he struggled to find evidence until the end, where he was murdered and sunk under the sea.



Seo Ha-ran was fired after it became known that her brother was a murderer. She had become involved in a multi-level marketing scheme with a friend. The result was her ruin. She lost everything and committed suicide.

This was the future that Tae-hyuk remembered. The reason he didn't want to be reminded of this was because the multi-level marketing scheme had caused the destruction of Ha-ran. Ha-ran was 25 years old this year, and she also went to L high school.

Was all of this simply a coincidence?

Tae-hyuk made a scary expression without saying anything, causing An Eun-young to wave her hands in front of his face.

“Oh, sorry I was thinking of something else. Continue the story.”

Tae-hyuk said with a casual expression.

“Y-Yes.”

An Eun-young resumed the explanation.

Her sister Eun-jeong thought of the school as a prison and went outside to play everyday. Then she met the leader of a bad group and they fell in love.

“... Unni left a letter saying she was sorry and vanished. She even took all of the gifts at home. Dad went crazy and removed Unni from the family register. It was the first time I’ve seen Dad so mad.”

“But how did you learn that she was involved in a multi-level scheme?”

“Hmm, that was a few days ago. I was coming home and a man on a motorcycle came with a note for An Eun-jeong’s little sister.”

“Did you see the man’s face?”

An Eun-young shook her head.

“He was wearing a helmet. This is the note.”

Tae-hyuk took the piece of paper that An Eun-young gave him and confirmed the contents.

‘An Eun-jeong is in danger of falling into a multi-level scheme. Tiwai International.’

It was suspicious, no matter how he looked at it.

“Did you tell your father?”

“No... He tore it up as soon as I give it to him...”

Tae-hyuk had a strange feeling when he looked at An Eun-young, who didn't care about her own safety. She believed in herself more than her parents.

He felt like he was chewing a mouthful of sand.

“Maybe this is better left to the police.”

An Eun-young's hands started shaking at Tae-hyuk's firm answer.

T-that's right... S-Sorry. I-I just wanted to consult with Tae-hyuk so, don't, I don't want to be a burden.”

Tae-hyuk felt a knot in his chest. Was it possible to end it this way?

A multi-level company was a seemingly legitimate business with no problems showing. If there was a report to the police, then they would say that it was wrong. What would happen if a full-fledged investigation was started? There would be little difference. A few people in charge would be sent to prison, but they certainly couldn't get a hold of everyone in the multi-level scheme. They would just move on to another company with a different name and sign.

Tae-hyuk sighed slowly.

‘Yes. This is the deal. If An Eun-jeong is really Noona’s friend, then I will plunge into this case. If there isn’t a connection, then I will consult Kang-suk hyung.’

Tae-hyuk pulled out his phone to send a message to Ha-ran.

–Noona. Did you have a friend called An Eun-jeong in high school?

Beep.

He pressed the Send button. What answer would come back? Tae-hyuk swallowed his saliva. 30 seconds passed before there was a reply.

–Yes. Noona’s friend. It has already been a few years since I’ve met her. Did she contact you on my old phone? Tell her to call me.

Tae-hyuk’s mouth trembled. As expected, Ha-ran and An Eun-jeong were friends. An Eun-jeong had drawn Ha-ran into the multi-level company world. If he helped An Eun-jeong now, then he could shatter the future of Seo Ha-ran, who fell into ruin due to the multi-level marketing scheme.

Tae-hyuk looked at An Eun-young, who seemed like she was about to cry. What if he suddenly changed his mind and said he would help?

‘Oh. Wait. There is that method!’

Seo Tae-hyuk was reminded of a game that could be called a man’s romance.

“Eun-young, I’m bored. Do you want to play Rock Paper Scissors? If you win, then I’ll help you with this case. Instead, if I win, help me with my newly developed magic...”

An Eun-young turned red with anger and threw out her hand to play Rock Paper Scissors.

Tae-hyuk, who was trying to lose intentionally by using the ‘Gambling’ skill, felt like crying. It was the door of truth that he never wanted to see!

---

“Tiwai International... it’s a multi-level company that was created 10 years ago, and will continue to operate for the next 14 years.”

Tae-hyuk muttered as he looked up at the 15 story building in front of him. This building was all Tiwai International. Usually, a multi-level company had around 1,000 members, and had billions of won in assets. That’s why it had such a great building. At least 10 times... No, more than 100 times.

There was a cardinal rule. If you don’t make other people your co-worker, then don’t bother going out. Maybe they were half

trapped in the building.

‘It isn’t a building but a dungeon.’

The inside was illegally modified like a maze. People wouldn’t be able to get out fully without knowing the way.

First, he came to look at the situation. But it seemed like he had to prepare properly before entering.

‘There are janitors and security guards going in and out.’

Tae-hyuk suddenly came up with a good plan to infiltrate Tiwai International. He would pose as a janitor to go inside. In order to do that, he needed clothes.

‘This is when the Internet marketplace is useful. Let’s see... The janitor uniform...’

In the old days, his guard uniform was commissioned from a uniform company. It took a lot of time.

Compared to that, Internet deals were easy and quick. A secondhand store selling janitor uniforms that boasted five million members caught his attention.

‘... Should I trade with Wang Grandmother Uniforms? It has a truly unique flavour.’

He travelled a few stops on the subway in order to make a direct deal with the person. Tae-hyuk made the right deal. After 30 minutes, he was able to get his hands on exactly what he wanted.

‘Then I’ll change in the toilets.’

He dressed as a janitor in the subway toilets and made his head damp with water. He used cream to appear haggard and now looked like a janitor. Then he went back to the entrance of the building where he was stopped by a security guard.

“What are you doing?”

Tae-hyuk used Voice Modulation to sound older.

“Kim-ssi’s body isn’t good so I came to replace him.”

The guard looked Tae-hyuk up and down.

“Hrmm. I didn’t hear about such a thing.”

“That’s why I came to tell you.”

“Oh, is that so? Then go in.”

“Yes, keep up the good work.”

In a building of this size, there were at least 10 janitors going in and out. At least one of them would have a surname of Kim.

Tae-hyuk shrugged and entered the building.

‘The beginning is good. The problem is where to find An Eun-jeong.’

The building appeared to have many rooms on each floor. But there were 15 floors. It would take a few days to search through each room. There was a loud noise from the entrance.

“I-I-I’m sorry. I’m late for a new employee seminar.”

A woman in a suit was talking to a security guard. Tae-hyuk smiled as he looked at the scene from afar.

‘An Eun-jeong has showed up in the wild.’

He found the person he was looking for. It was a more mature face than the one he saw in the photo. She was wearing a khaki suit and had makeup on his face. She literally felt like a new employee. But when he looked closely, he could see some similarities to An Eun-young.

An Eun-jeong took the stairs on her high heels. Surprisingly, this building didn’t have an elevator. It was so that the members



couldn't run off easily.

Tae-hyuk slowly followed behind her.

---

The seminar sat down the new people that the employees had brought and explain the company's system. A middle aged man turned on a projector and was giving a speech.

Tae-hyuk snuck through the back door and casually sat in the back. He had changed from the janitor clothes to normal clothes.

In the seminar room, dozens of men and women of various ages were sitting. An Eun-jeong was among them.

‘Is she a frivolous person?’

A person with this type of mentality. Everyone in the room responded together, even if they didn't understand. Obviously, more than half the people in this room had frivolous characters.

The middle-aged man spat out.

“Remember the IMF in 1997? Do you know what caused it?”

People raised their hands.

“People buy and sell foreign goods. Doesn’t everything overseas look luxurious?”

The man said.

“Do you all know? Some will teach you from the textbooks. But I won’t. In fact, it is something that all big companies and the government can’t do.”

The man shook his head and plausible graphs and interviews with experts appeared on the projector.

“In the end, the big companies will wrong people in order to save money. But what will happen to them? All those who work are forced into early retirement. Their business goes into debt and they commit suicide. Your siblings living at home will have to clean the kitchen. It is due to overconsumption? People want to travel abroad or have foreign cars. How will you get your hands on these?”

The people in the seminar room were all quiet.

“So, you have to put survival above other people’s lives. Regardless of the labour reform, people do what they can to live as cheaply as possible. If you say that it is hard then your efforts aren’t enough. Let’s compromise. Share the pain. Squeeze them more. Who will defend the salary of more than two million won that you will receive here?”

No one raised their hand.

“Do you know why? It is because things aren’t distributed properly? Distribute it. Is it distributed properly? That is the question. You should get paid as much as you can. So we have developed a new marketing system for you. Now, please pay attention to the screen.”

The people who had been distracted 10 minutes ago, started listening to the man. Tae-hyuk stared at the man who caught the crowd’s attention. His eloquent words sounded plausible. His charisma overpowered the audience.

‘Choi Sung-yeol. You were here.’

One of the blacklist members. The scammer Choi Sung-yeol was here.

## Chapter 47 – The Family’s Condition #3

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Choi Sung-yeol’s words contained a strange eloquence. He blended one lie among 10 facts. That way, it sounded like he was just telling the truth.

The contents of Choi Sung-yeol’s words were simple. Large corporations regarded their employees like slaves. In addition, they bribed politicians to try to pass labour reform laws. No matter how hard someone worked, they could be thrown away like a used tissue. They would never be rewarded for their efforts.

However, Tiwai was different. By default, in order to join the company, a person had to purchase a certain amount of shares. It wasn’t a relationship between an employer and employee, but one where everyone was an owner. If there were tangible results, then their rating would go up. The higher the rating, the greater the distribution.

‘Well, it sounds like a plausible story.’

Tae-hyuk clicked his tongue.

It was no use if people were owners. In the end, the exploitation targets just changed to a higher grade.

However, Choi Sung-yeol was extremely good at cajoling the new members. There were men and women next to him, all decoys planted by Tiwai.

The old people praised him by using their years of experience. The young ones said they had a burning passion. There were those who didn't have proper jobs, and were now living well. Every one of them spoke words of praise. The praise, that was as smooth as butter, poured out of their mouths and were caught in the people's ears.

While the sense of confidence increased, the final blow was dealt. If they joined now, then they could go up to a higher grade. They could reach the status of other people, who had worked for a few years, in an instant.

In that way, the participants were persuaded. Interviews with members of Tiwai were broadcasted on the screen. The attendees looked at the screen with flushed faces.

“Look at this. Many people are making more than five million a month. Are you willing to do that? Do you lack experience? Or is there a lack of enthusiasm?”

A person who earned around 800,000 a month would become someone who earned more than 10 million won in the first three months. A man, who said he was in his first year of employment, took out the key for a foreign car from his pocket and shook it.

Now everything was gathered for the perfect situation.

Tae-hyuk laughed.

‘It is like taking off the label and replacing it with one from a deluxe brand. Furthermore, that isn’t a key no matter how I look at it.’

It was a fake made for use as a movie prop. It was made elaborately so that it couldn’t be distinguished from the real thing. However, Tae-hyuk had the ability to grasp the authenticity of an object, due to the Forgery skill improving his discerning eye.

Tae-hyuk wondered if he would receive a new crime skill and checked the Demon Revealing Mirror.

‘Um. There is no new skill.’

So far, Tae-hyuk had met seven blacklist members. However, except for Big Mama, he didn’t receive any of their crime skills. Was it necessary to upgrade to Noble?

‘By the way, what is An Eun-jeong doing? She isn’t a decoy?’

She hadn’t appeared with Choi Sung-yeol’s party. Tae-hyuk looked around the meeting room and was able to find her. An Eun-jeong was sitting in a corner and writing down Choi Sung-yeol’s notes in a notebook. She looked just like An Eun-young.

‘... They are truly family.’

The other people were busy talking to each other. Tae-hyuk sat next to An Eun-jeong and asked.

“You have been writing really hard. What is the content?”

An Eun-jeong laughed and held out her notes.

“This? I was writing about Choi Sung-yeol sunbae. He really is great, and none of his words are ridiculous. The money he earns as well... I want to be like him someday.”

An Eun-jeong was looking at Choi Sung-yeol with sincerely respectful eyes.

Tae-hyuk inwardly sighed.

She was completely deceived without knowing it. The good news was that she hadn't been completely corrupted yet.

‘I need to discover how deep her feet are.’

“An Eun-jeong is working really hard.”

“Uh, how did you know my name...?”

An Eun-jeong asked with wide eyes. Tae-hyuk pointed to the employee ID hanging around her neck.

“I saw the name hanging around your neck. Oh right, my name is Lee Cheol-su.”

Tae-hyuk gave the pseudonym he used during the voyeur incident.

An Eun-jeong nodded.

“Oh, I see. Anyway, I am currently a silver member. If I can recruit 10 more people, then I can upgrade to gold... I need to work harder!”

An Eun-jeong took a fighting posture. She had a similar atmosphere to Ha-ran. It felt like he was watching a child.

Tae-hyuk lowered his voice as much as possible and said.

“That’s amazing. Already a silver member... You must have spent a large amount of money.”

An Eun-jeong hesitated before opening her mouth.

“... Yes. In fact, it was the money I had set aside to rent a room. I used it all but... I can make a lot more once I become a gold member!”

Tae-hyuk’s head started to hurt.



She must have devoted millions of won into this. After becoming a part of the multilevel marketing, a person could easily obtain a higher grade if they spent a certain amount of money.

However, the problem was after that happened. They had already invested money, and now they couldn't pull their feet out. Once that happened, the appearance of the company would change by 180 degrees.

‘Gather members. Bring in more money because your shares are low. Go out and sell new products.’

There was constant exploitation. At the end of the day, they wouldn't be able to sell enough.

An Eun-jeong was laughing with an innocent face.

‘I thought she was moderately quick-witted...’

The woman in front of him never even imagined that she was being deceived.

“I'll ask you just one thing. How many people have you brought here?”

“Well... Two or three people.”

A fool pulled in other fools. The multilevel scheme was truly scary.

Tae-hyuk asked with a heavy expression.

“So they all became part of Eun-jeong’s shares?”

At that moment, An Eun-jeong’s eyes shook.

“... It isn’t like that. It will be given the next time I register a name.”

“I see. The people Eun-jeong brought in received consultation from another person and was registered under their name. Next time, do better. Is that the method?”

An Eun-jeong looked at Tae-hyuk with a startled expression. Based on her expression, it seemed like he had struck the nail on the head.

“H-How did you know?”

Tae-hyuk told An Eun-jeong the truth.

“If you gather 10 more people, then you can reach the gold rank?”

“Yes...”

The confident voice from a few minutes ago had become smaller.

“That number will never go to zero. Eun-jeong also knows this to a certain extent.”

“.....”

An Eun-jeong looked at Tae-hyuk with a shocked face. Tae-hyuk had stabbed her with the sword of truth. However, he needed to use this degree of shock therapy on Eun-jeong.

At that moment, a strange thing happened.

‘Uh, what?’

Tae-hyuk noticed a strange smell spreading in the seminar room. It was a smoke with a sweet, floral scent. He felt light-headed the moment he breathed it in.

An Eun-jeong’s eyes also became blank. Then suddenly, her eyes became animated again.

She spoke in a strong tone.

“T-That can’t be. I can surely upgrade my rank if I work hard!

Ah, that's right. Cheol-su! Cheol-su shouldn't think like that. Cheol-su is also in our company. We should work hard together to make a lot of money. Then my father..."

'Damn...'

He thought it was almost over. However, An Eun-jeong was completely possessed by this strange perfume.

Tae-hyuk bit his lip and pulled out the Demon Revealing Mirror to check his status.

"O-Oh my god! All my stats are being reduced at a tremendous pace!"

His intelligence, that was close to 50, was now near 40 points. Tae-hyuk realized that his judgment was gradually falling.

'Did they even use a hallucinogen?'

He grabbed his left little finger in order to regain his spirit.

Wooduk!

The twisting of the bones caused his stats to stop falling. Tae-hyuk inwardly screamed but persisted.

‘This isn’t a normal method for a multilevel company. Wait a minute. Didn’t Choi Sung-yeol have a partner?’

He wasn’t a criminal who worked alone. He committed his scams with an even worse colleague. The name of another blacklist member popped into Tae-hyuk’s mind.

‘... Producer Kim Joon-young!’

He was a famous criminal who produced bizarre shows, a producer. Then the fragrance with the hallucinatory effect... Perhaps there were three or more criminals gathered here.

‘Damn. Now they are flocking.’

Scammer Choi Sung-yeol. Producer Kim Joon-young. An unknown perfume user.

Tiwai International was a lair full of criminals. Tae-hyuk was barely able to win against the hippo using all of his skills. Since then, he hadn’t got any new skills or upgrades. Yet this place had three criminals. In addition, there was the unidentified man who sent the note to An Eun-young. Who was he?

Tae-hyuk bit his lip as he thought about it.

---

‘But the fact that the Producer is here...’

Unfortunately, there wasn't much written about him in the blacklist. However, he remembered about the Death Circus run by the Producer. It was a flashy show of human desire and betrayal.

Tae-hyuk thought about the structure of the building. The interior was much smaller compared to the size. It felt like there were secret rooms that couldn't be entered through a normal route.

Maybe the Producer was planning the Death Circus.

Tae-hyuk realized that there was only one way for An Eun-jeong to escape from here.

“Eun-jeong. If there was a way to raise your rating all at once, what would you do?”

“Huh? A-All of a sudden?”

“It isn't gold but the platinum rating.”

Eun-jeong covered her mouth with her hands at Tae-hyuk's words. It was the same rating as Choi Sung-yeol. He led the thousands of silver and gold members and gained a huge amount of money from what they earned.

“R-Really?”

“If you have any doubts, then you can ask Choi Sung-yeol.”

Tae-hyuk didn't miss the fire blazing in An Eun-jeong's eyes. She really was an easily convinced woman.

“... If there really is such a method then I will do anything. S-Surely...”

“It probably isn't what you are thinking. You could die.”

“How do you know such a thing? Are you not an ordinary member?”

Tae-hyuk smirked. Now she had noticed.

“I came for this. Do you understand?”

“Ah...”

“But I can't do it alone. How about it? Do you want to reach the platinum rating with me?”

An Eun-jeong gave a strange groan as she hesitated for a moment. And after a while. She came to a conclusion and nodded.

“I accept. I should put my life on the line to make money.”

‘Ugh. This woman! Does she even know what she is saying?’

Tae-hyuk inwardly screamed. The words made him feel like puking. He needed to show An Eun-jeong reality.

‘... Yes. Let’s try it. Death Circus. If I look at it directly then I’ll discover what I need to know.’

“Can you wait a minute? I have something to say to Choi Sung-yeol.”

“Yes.”

Tae-hyuk walked towards the front of the room. Two people were talking without any worries to Choi Sung-yeol. Tae-hyuk smiled as he reached Choi Sung-yeol.

“What is going on? I saw you talking to An Eun-jeong. Is there an incident that you would like to document?”

“Oh, I wanted to join. I came when I heard that Kim Joon-young was here.”

“Huh? You came to see Kim Joon-young...”

“An Eun-jeong wants to play. Both of us would like to join the Death Circus.”



Choi Sung-yeol's mouth twisted strangely.

“Ohuhu... There are applicants. How did you court An Eun-jeong? Anyway, it is nice to meet you. The show is scheduled for tonight.”

“I'm glad that I don't have to wait.”

“But is it really okay? You are still young. Your lives will be ours the moment you apply to participate in the Death Circus.”

“It doesn't matter. I will win.”

Choi Sung-yeol smiled brightly.

At best, they were hoping to pluck tens of millions of won from pushovers. Yet he willingly participated in the Death Circus. Now they could get hundreds of million of won.

“That confident expression is good. Then I will introduce you to Director Kim Joon-young.”

That night, the Death Circus was going to begin.

## Chapter 48 – The Family’s Condition #4

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Tae-hyuk and Eun-jeong were guided to a VIP room by Choi Sung-yeol. Sitting in the lavishly decorated room was a middle aged man.

‘Producer...!’

Kim Joon-young looked like an ordinary man with a good style. He wore a neat, tailored suit, and had cropped hair. He had the atmosphere of a high income professional. However, he was actually the criminal responsible for the production and distribution of dangerous videos for nearly 10 years.

His main product was snuff films, showing brutal murder scenes. He showed a wide variety of people being killed in order to earn a profit. The terrifying thing about Kim Joon-young was that he did nothing but prepare the situation. He made many murder videos without getting his hands dirty.

However, there was a limit to the profit he could get from snuff videos. People eventually wanted a stronger stimulus. People quickly got tired of the videos of people being brutally killed. In addition, there were rumours that he was being targeted by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation.

So Kim Joon-young started the ‘Death Circus’ business. It was a game where people risked their lives in extreme situations. People watched in real time through magic windows or surveillance cameras. It wasn’t a recorded video — the situation was actually

happening in front of them.

It was a tremendous sensation. Domestic as well as foreign conglomerates swarmed to the market, causing entry tickets to soar to hundreds of millions of won. The only problem was that the survival rate was close to zero, decreasing the participants. Thus, he needed to find new participants each time the Death Circus happened, but that wasn't easy.

Choi Sung-yeol then appeared with the multilevel company, Tiwai International. The multilevel scheme sucked out the blood marrow from the members. After being driven to their limit, they would be entered into the Death Circus and forced to play a game with their lives on the line.

The two criminals created such a devilish system, and approximately seven years from now... Choi Sung-yeol and Kim Joon-young were arrested and sentenced in accordance to the federal laws.

However, the system they created continued, and there was an endless number of victims. Perhaps Seo Ha-ran...

Tae-hyuk felt dizzy. This incident didn't end with simply catching the criminal. He had to destroy the very system they created.

Just before sitting down, Tae-hyuk sent a message to somebody. The stage where the Death Circus was held didn't allow radio waves in or out. Therefore, all his preparations needed to be

completed before entering.

Seo Tae-hyuk and An Eun-jeong sat down as tea and refreshments were placed in front of them. At first glance, the food looked luxurious. However, Tae-hyuk didn't touch it.

Kim Joon-young quietly observed the two people before opening his mouth.

“Hello. I've heard that you want to join the Death Circus.”

Tae-hyuk answered while secretly sending messages on his smartphone.

“That's right.”

Next, it was An Eun-jeong's turn. She asked the most important thing for her.

“Is it really true that I can leap to platinum rating in one go if I participate?”

“Of course. In addition, if you are lucky enough, then you can make an unimaginable amount of money overnight.”

“Wah...”

“Well, it is a little dangerous. But if you survive, you can earn a huge amount of money. In theory, assuming that you win all the games, you can earn approximately three billion won.”

It was an enormous amount of money that could change a person's life. An Eun-jeong drank the tea with a rapt expression as Kim Joon-young said.

“You are called Lee Cheol-su. Won't you have some?”

“I ate some bad lunch so it hurts.”

“Then that is serious. Now that you pledged to participate in the Death Circus, you won't be able to get out of here. Should I ask for some medication to be brought over?”

Kim Joon-young's words were obvious. Tae-hyuk shook his head and replied.

“It is okay. I will be fine after some rest.”

“Haha. I'm glad. Then let's talk about contracts. Please look at this.”

Kim Joon-young pulled out two pieces of paper from a bag. He seemed to be in a good mood.

Lee Cheol-su and An Eun-jeong were lively young people. Those

who participated in the Death Circus were in such a serious crisis that they wanted to commit suicide. Their spirits were likely to be dead before participating in the game. A desire to live needed to be ignited.

However, this wasn't necessary for these two. In particular, An Eun-jeong's appearance was quite good. The customers would be satisfied if a girl like her screamed in pain. Maybe tonight, he would be able to get a record level of revenue. Kim Joon-young's eyes shone with greed.

Tae-hyuk looked at the piece of paper. In summary, it was a 'body waiver.' Those who participated in the Death Circus didn't receive any legal protection. Tiwai had the rights to the corpses.

It was ridiculous enough to be unreasonable. For the most part, the ones signing this were able to die anyway so it was their last gamble.

An Eun-jeong had already signed it. Tae-hyuk sighed and wrote down Lee Cheol-su.

Kim Joon-young made a satisfied expression.

"The details can be seen after entering the Death Circus. Good luck on receiving a jackpot!"

---

"Ohuhu..."

Kim Joon-young laughed as the two participants left to join the Death Circus. Tonight there were more participants than usual. In addition, the two people who entered...

The female was an employee of Tiwai International.

Kim Joon-young would have eventually convinced her to join the Death Circus. However, he had expected it to take 10 years. He remembered thinking that she was a girl who would have a lot of value in the future. It was a little quicker than expected, so tonight would be heated up. A young girl crying in pain was the best entertainment.

But the man was unusual.

“He is called Lee Cheol-su?”

He wasn't an employee of Tiwai, but he seemed to be familiar with the Death Circus. Perhaps he was a puppet prepared by one of the guests.

“It isn't unwelcome.”

Kim Joon-young laughed.

He contacted some people and told them to pay attention to Lee Cheol-su. At first glance, the system of the Death Group seemed

very fair.

Win money or lose your lives. However, this was just the stage that Kim Joon-young prepared. There were numerous traps for the participants. In the end, Tiwai would have the last laugh.

Kim Joon-young sat on a chair and watched the monitors. It showed all of the Death Circus. All he needed to do was relax and enjoy it.

There were numerous attractions and traps that were impossible to survive. It was impossible even for a god. Kim Joon-young was certain.

---

A man in a black suit guided Tae-hyuk and Eun-jeong somewhere.

The building had a labyrinth-like structure.

Eun-jeong's face had turned pale.

“W-What am I doing...?”

She seemed to have realized that she had signed a waiver form, and that she couldn't run away from here. The only way to escape was to clear all the attractions, and use 200 million to purchase a platinum certificate.



The guide said.

“Once again, I’ll explain the rules. All participants will receive 50 million won by default. The value of life... You can think of it as that.”

The man explained while walking down the passage.

“And An Eun-jeong, you have shares in Tiwai International. That money will be given as well.”

An Eun-jeong’s expression brightened.

“The shares are obviously worth 100 million... So I will have that in addition to the 50 million?”

The man in the black suit shook his head.

“No. Ahn Eun-Jung’s share is worth roughly 15 million won. The rest has been distributed to the upper ranks.”

“Huh? T-That is ridiculous! I definitely bought 100 million in shares!”

“Have you forgotten that a portion of the shares would be transferred to the upper ranks?”

“T-That’s right...”

If she recruited new members, then a portion of their money would be hers. Most people only thought about that. She didn’t notice that her own shares would also be taken.

Tae-hyuk listened to the conversation between the man and An Eun-jeong.

‘85% was taken from the beginning. You really evil bastards.’

It meant that the members absolutely couldn’t climb up from silver rank. They would undergo the pain forever, and would eventually be forced to participate in the Death Circus.

The man stood in front of a firmly closed iron gate and contacted someone through a radio. Then there was a lumbering sound as the door opened.

“We have now arrived. My role ends here. I wish you will obtain a jackpot.”

The black suited man bowed and disappeared back the way they came.

“U-Uh...?”

Eun-jeong made a confused expression as she looked inside. A game of life or death. She had imagined a dark basement place guarded by many men. However, the interior was completely unexpected.

It was almost like...

Tae-hyuk said.

“An amusement park?”

There were mascot dolls wandering around. There were also a few rides scattered here and there.

“Yes. Isn’t this better than I thought?”

Tae-hyuk shrugged.

They looked like ordinary attractions, but she still didn’t know the horror of this place. As the two of them entered, a mascot doll came up and gave them badges.

Tae-hyuk sighed and accepted it.

“Now it will really start.”

Once he placed in on his chest, the badge showed the number 50.

It meant that his current money was 50 million won.

“Just place it on the chest?”

An Eun-jeong copied him and the number 65 appeared.

The two people entered. Then an announcement was heard.

-Since there are two new entrants, I will explain it once again. Your e-money will be reduced by 10 every hour. Once it reaches zero, you will be automatically eliminated, so please be careful. Then I hope you hit the jackpot!

Elimination meant death. In addition, there was a 10 million won fee every hour. It was ridiculous.

Tae-hyuk tugged the hand of the despairing An Eun-jeong.

“There are some people playing Pirate Roulette over there.”

Tae-hyuk pointed to a place that was slightly far away.

There were two people playing a pirate game. There was a pirate in the barrel, and people would insert their knives in order. The winner would be the one who caused the pirate to pop out. The barrel was made large enough for someone to enter. The man inside had a pale white face as he bit his lip. The person holding the knife outside was hesitating about which hole to insert it into.

There were 10 attractions in this place. Each one had a sign explaining how to play them. An Eun-jeong read the sign for Pirate Roulette.

“After entering, three knives must be inserted before leaving. If successful, you will be paid 10 million won. You can gain an additional 10 million won for each successive win. If you fail, then the money of the person with the knife will be recovered. Umm... There are nine holes in total. Take a good position. If your position isn't good then you might end up stabbed in the arms or legs.”

“Well. Is it like that?”

The man holding the knife shouted.

“J-Just one more and it will be 90 million won! I'm sorry but just one more...”

The man inside the barrel shrieked, but the man holding the knife didn't stop.

“Oooooof!”

The knife entered the barrel and blood emerged. An Eun-jeong covered her mouth with both hands as she watched.

“This is the 4th failure... he has no luck.”

“Failure? He was successful in one thing. The person inside didn’t die yet.”

“Huh? B-But the knife!”

“Only one out of the nine holes doesn’t have a knife device installed. Any hole would stab the person inside with a knife. How could he survive so many stab wounds? This is the Pirate Roulette you are watching right now.”

Tae-hyuk explained in a calm voice. However, the information was bloody.

“... R-Ridiculous, n-no... How is this...?”

An Eun-jeong sat down on the spot. From now on, the games they would have to play were far crazier.

Tae-hyuk said.

“Then let’s go to the next attraction.”

He pulled Eun-jeong up and walked to the next attraction.

Death Circus. It was a crazy amusement park where those who entered would die. It was systematically impossible to survive here.

However, Seo Tae-hyuk was different. He was certain of victory.

## Chapter 49 – The Family’s Condition #5

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Tae-hyuk circled around the Death Circus and explained each of the attractions to An Eun-jeong one by one. The rules of the death game, spoken in a calm and cool voice, were imprinted into Eun-jeong’s head.

The next place that they arrived at was a pool filled with water up to the knees.

“There is a cylindrical shaped cushion floating on the water. Perhaps this is an attraction where we have to make it to the other side.”

“.....”

Tae-hyuk approached the sign and said.

“If successful, we will be awarded 30 million won. By the way, the liquid underneath is hydrochloric acid. If a person slips, then their bones will melt. But the worst thing is that the hydrochloric acid isn’t very deep. It isn’t enough to cause instant death. You will have to endure a few minutes where your feet is melting. The name of the attraction is the Bridge of Pain... Doesn’t the name really match?”

It was a method that frequently appeared on TV entertainment programs. The red stain spreading in the hydrochloric acid looked like strawberry syrup. There was also a lump floating in one corner. Tae-hyuk spoke as he pointed to it.



“It seems like one challenger has already failed. Still, I think that this attraction has a better return on time than others. We are wasting money by just looking around. Why don’t you try it?”

“I-I-I can’t! How can I do that?”

Other attractions would only cause a loss of money if they failed. Even if it hurt, there wasn’t a 100% chance of dying. However, the Bridge of Pain would cause death if she didn’t recover instantly. Furthermore, the appearance of the red syrup and lump of flesh turned her off from the attraction.

30 million won could only be obtained from taking such risks. Tae-hyuk was reminded of entertainment programs again. An obstacle was placed on an ordinary pool and the contestant had to cross to the other side. If the contestant fell, then they would only get wet.

Even so, the success rate wasn’t that high. Among them, the most difficult thing to run on was a cylinder. In other forms, they could grab onto the cushion if they lost their balance and fell. However, the cylindrical cushion was different. They would literally turn over and hit the water.

Falling meant death. It was hard to take one step in this situation, even if the person was strong. Moreover, this wasn’t the end.

Tae-hyuk looked at the large fan that was installed in the middle

of the pool. It was off now, but it was ready to operate at any time.

‘In the first place, the Bridge of Pain is an attraction that can never be cleared.’

After seeing one failure, there wouldn’t be anyone who could easily challenge this.

Tae-hyuk knew how Kim Joon-young would take advantage of this. The Death Circus had a closing time. At that time, those who collected close to the amount of escape might rarely come out. If they collected 20~30 million won each time, then they would eventually get 200 million won.

However, there wasn’t enough time to play the games. Then this bridge would become the temptation for them to get enough money for freedom. Of course, it was just like a gun loaded with bullets. The participants inevitably put their feet on the bridge, and once they started crossing...

The result was that more strawberry syrup would be added to the pool.

“Then let’s go to the next attraction.”

An Eun-jeong grabbed Tae-hyuk’s collar as he walked forward. She couldn’t speak properly after such a great shock.

“I-I-I’m so...rry. T-Take a break for a moment...”

“There is still a lot to see. Time is also money. As you can see, most of the attractions engender conflict between people. It is better to move as much as possible.”

There was no time to waste. An Eun-jeong replied in a squeamish voice.

“...I can barely move. 10 minutes... no, just five minutes.”

“Then we will take a break for five minutes and look around again.”

He saw a place where they could take a break. There were chairs and a table. Next to it was a vending machine.

“I-I’ll get a drink...”

“I would strongly recommend that you don’t drink anything here, despite being thirsty. Devices are prepared. There is a possibility that you might ingest something strange.”

Eun-jeong bit her lip. She remembered the tea and sweets she ate before coming here.

“Then what I ate...”

“Well. It is possible. But you were the one who made the choice. I

guess this is the big price you have to pay.”

“.....”

Eun-jeong couldn't answer and looked down at the table. A small sob was heard. Tae-hyuk looked at the crying Eun-jeong with cold eyes.

She was the one who would drive Ha-ran to ruin. Of course, it was also due to the bad multilevel company Tiwai International and the Death Circus organized by Producer Kim Joon-young. However, this didn't mean that An Eun-jeong's sins had disappeared. She had already pulled several people into the multilevel company.

If he had to say some harsh words... Every person needed to be accountable for their choices. An Eun-jeong had signed up for the Death Circus, and now she was paying for it. But she still had something left. The sin of bringing in innocent people to the multilevel scheme. It was something that couldn't be easily repaid.

“Noona should know how many people suffered from her mistakes. How many people did you bring into this company? They will all meet ends like this.”

“...I-I'm sorry. I am really sorry.”

An Eun-jeong couldn't raise her head and started to apologize.

He lost his appetite. She was the enemy who drove Seo Ha-ran to ruin. He would rather hate her and act like she was a criminal, but that wasn't the case.

She was also a victim of the system. He couldn't forgive her but he decided not to blame her.

Tae-hyuk wanted to confirm one thing with Eun-jeong. It was the reason why she had joined Tiwai International.

“By the way, why did you need so much money?”

An Eun-jeong was lost in thought for a moment and didn't say anything. Then all of a sudden, she started talking.

“I have a younger sister and there is a distinct gap between us. I prefer to play around without much interest in studying, while she is an example of a perfect student. She always got first place since elementary school.”

She had a younger sister who was a model student. An Eun-jeong had a huge inferiority complex towards her sister.

“My dad told me to marry quickly since I can't do anything else. He engaged me to a promising doctor... In the end, I couldn't bear it, so I ran away. But... But... I found out that my mother had leukemia. I wanted to be recognized. I wanted her to be proud of her daughter at least once before she died. Not the stupid daughter who ran away...”

Eun-jeong's voice trailed off and she slowly started to cry.

Tae-hyuk said.

“Eun-jeong wanted to be recognized as family?”

“Yes....”

“Then I'm sorry. They seem to think a little differently.”

“.....”

Eun-jeong lowered her face with a really pained expression. However, Tae-hyuk's words didn't end there.

“In fact, I came here as a favor to someone.

“F-Favour?”

“Yes. Someone asked me to rescue Eun-jeong from here.”

“W-Who...?”

“To be exact, it was your younger sister.”

Eun-jeong's eyes widened as she realized who sent Tae-hyuk to this place.

“The conditions for being a family? Is there such a thing? It doesn't matter how wrong you were, nor how bad you are now. You are still family. Stop being a fool and come back soon.”

“Ah...!”

An Eun-jeong sighed. Then she muttered in a low voice.

“Eun-young... I'm sorry...”

‘Is the shock therapy over?’

Tae-hyuk sighed and patted Eun-jeong's hair. What would she look like if her sister was actually in front of her? He tried to imagine such a ridiculous thing, but it wasn't over yet. No, rather, it was starting now.

“The melodrama has now ended. Anyway, so far we've looked at roughly 70% of the attractions. You must have come to the conclusion that you can't get out of here.”

“...Yes.”

“This is just like human chess. If you lose, then you will lose a corresponding body part. If you are lucky and win consecutively,

you'll only lose an arm or an eye. You don't want to leave here like that."

"Then what can I do?"

"From now on, Eun-jeong will have to entrust me with your money and life. If you don't like it, then you can move on your own."

An Eun-jeong bit her lip. It was a proposal that wasn't easy to accept.

"But what is your relationship with my younger sister?"

"Well. She was gracious enough to change my fate. That is all I will tell you."

He had become a model student because of An Eun-young.

Eun-jeong fell deep into thought. She seemed to be debating on whether she should believe the stranger in front of her or not.

Tae-hyuk waited until she answered. If the proposal was accepted then she would become a chess piece that could be used at will.

"Yes. I accept. I'll give you everything. So... Please take me to my sister."



“Then the contract is established.”

“But is there a way to get out of here?”

Tae-hyuk laughed and started to slowly explain his plans. An Eun-jeong’s eyes opened wider as she listened to his words.

“T-That isn’t possible!”

It was really ridiculous.

---

Cha Soo-hyun was looking around the Death Circus.

He understood the rules of this place better than any other participant.

A variety of attractions existed. However, there were two major types. Apart from completing some missions with given conditions, there was the PvP format where two people competed to take the opponent’s money. Of course, there was a high percentage of the latter. In particular, the missions were fatal if there was even a small error. Only fools would be deceived by such things.

Cha Soo-hyun was a survivor, despite the survival rate being close to zero. He received a platinum membership card, but he wasn’t satisfied with it. He had realized the pleasure of killing

others.

It couldn't be done outside. However, it was possible here. In addition, he could also get extra income. He could earn more than 200 million overnight.

This was already the third time that Cha Soo-hyun had participated in the Death Circus. Of course, he had to change his face by using a simple cosmetic surgery, because he couldn't reveal his identity. Only a few in Tiwai were aware of this fact.

He would kill 10 people tonight. Their lives would be worth 500 million.

Cha Soo-hyun had already eaten two people. Now he had to find the next prey.

Then he found some cute rabbits hiding near the Bridge of Pain.

'A man and a woman.'

The woman looked like she would be a tasty kill. In addition, they seemed scared to challenge the attractions.

'Well, the man...'

Was he in his early 20s? He had bushy hair and a leather jacket. He seemed like a neighbourhood bum.

Looking at the nameplate on their chests, he was surprised to see that both of them had stayed above 50 million won.

Cha Soo-hyun licked his lips. Then he approached them with a face that was as innocent as possible.

“This is too much. It really is a crazy game... I don’t think I was in my right mind.”

“Who are you?”

The woman asked. The man just yawned with a blank face.

“Oh, I am Cha Soo-hyun. Haven’t you tried any of the attractions yet?”

“Yes... So what?”

“I was looking for someone like that. I know a strategy where three people can win more than 50 million won. How about it? Do you want to cooperate and survive this crazy game?”

The woman tilted her head with confusion. Her expression was unsure. Then the yawning man opened his mouth.

“Sheesh. I guess so.”

It seemed like this man was the one who made the decisions.

“Really? It’s a surefire win. Really appetizing.”

Cha Soo-hyun laughed.

The opponent was already halfway there. Now all he had to do was eat.

# Chapter 50 – Death Circus #1

---

A day before Tae-hyuk infiltrated Tiwai International. The 10 affinity points he gained from catching the hippo were still unused. Tae-hyuk was going to strengthen a few skills with it.

“But what is this platinum draw...?”

A message like this appeared.

[Platinum Draw Chance!]

-You can obtain various skills by using 10 affinity points.

-It is possible to acquire skills that aren't available due to the your low rank.

-The more you draw in a row, the more points you will consume.

In the beginning, you can draw a skill with 10 points. However, from the second draw, it will increase in increments of 10.

“Then the second draw will cost 100 affinity points...”

It seemed to imply that he could draw every time he raised his

rank. Tae-hyuk clicked his tongue.

“Wow, isn’t this completely like a mobile game?”

It seemed to be exactly the same, except affinity points were used instead of cash. It meant that there were also losing tickets.

“... Should I strengthen my skills? Or should I pick up a new skill...”

Tae-hyuk stood at the crossroads of choice. He thought for a while before coming to a conclusion.

“Yes. This is a man’s romance! This time I will draw X-ray Vision!”

It was a skill that he had missed gaining. He decided to invest 10 affinity points in order to obtain the man’s romance. Tae-hyuk pressed the START button and saw the roulette turn around on the Demon Revealing Mirror. There were cheerful sound effects as he received the message indicating that he got a new skill.

“W-wait a minute. This skill is...!”

Tae-hyuk’s eyes widened as he gazed at the Demon Revealing Mirror.

The stage was at Tiwai headquarters where the Death Circus was

being held.

The time left until the closing-310 minutes.

---

“There is a winning strategy.”

Cha Soo-hyun said with a confident expression.

“Really? A winning strategy sound really appetizing.”

Tae-hyuk’s eyes flashed as he gazed at Cha Soo-hyun.

“It has been less than an hour since the two of you participated. Um. You’re Lee Cheol-su and An Eun-jeong.”

Those who attended the Death Circus had name badges on their chests. It was a simple digital display that had two things written on it: the owner’s name and the amount of money they possessed. The participants had to always wear it.

Cha Soo-hyun confirmed the money of Seo Tae-hyuk and An Eun-jeong. The two people had a combined value of 115 million won.

“I’ll try to keep it simple. I currently have 85 million won. Do you want to check it?”

“That’s okay.”

“Indeed. The three of us have exactly 200 million. There are two major types of games in the Death Circus. You might already know after looking around for a while... There are various attractions where you risk your lives to win prizes, or you can gamble with other participants. These two types.”

Cha Soo-hyun watched Tae-hyuk and Eun-young before asking.

“Uh, are the two of you lovers?”

“Did you notice? I won’t deny it.”

“Then you will surely want to escape from here together.”

Tae-hyuk made an exaggerated glum expression.

“... The problem is that we need 400 million to do this. I didn’t know it was such a crazy game. Nevertheless, I should at least send Eun-jeong out of here.”

“Ah...! You are prepared to sacrifice yourself for your lover! However, there is no need to do this as my winning strategy means that all three of us can get out of here safely. I can get 200 million won per person.”



“G-Great!”

Cha Soo-hyun licked his lips and swallowed his saliva. His prey was already halfway there, and all he had to do now was eat. He had come to this place two times already, and knew how to eat people. That was how he managed to obtain 85 million won in two hours.

“Let me explain the blind spot in the Death Circus’ system. The ultimate goal is to get 200 million won and escape from this place.

“Um... We can definitely get out of here if we get 200 million won.”

“Yes. In a nutshell, no one here has more than 200 million won.”

Cha Soo-hyun started to explain with a serious expression.

His aim was to make money easily by taking it away from the other participants. He wouldn’t risk himself with the dangerous attractions. By default, the majority of the participants wouldn’t be able to live.

There were approximately 30 participants in the Death Circus. The total amount of money circulating throughout the circus was nearly two billion won. However, every time an hour passed, 10 million won would be taken out as the participation fee. In the end, the total amount of money of all the participants would keep decreasing.

It was literally a zero-sum game. In order to increase it, participating in the missions was necessary in order to get money from the organizer. In other words, there was still two billion remaining. If he continued to win at PvP, then he could reach 600 million, enough for three people.

“The most typical gamble here is Bluff Poker. If you lose the ante, then you will pay with money or a corresponding amount of blood. It is a rate of 10 million won per 100ml. If a human loses two litres of blood then they would die, even if they are a strong adult male. If we combine our assets, then it is 200 million won. When looking at the odds, we can draw two litres of the opponent’s blood before losing all our money. I am confident in a fight against anyone. Will you believe in me and entrust me with your money?”

The 200 million was a carefully calculated amount that would create a dominate position in any gambles conducted inside the Death Circus. It would literally be a one-sided slaughter. The problem was that the audience didn’t want to see such things. They wanted a fight where they didn’t know who would die. Thus, anyone who collected 200 million would get a platinum membership and would be sent out of here.

Cha Soo-hyun’s winning strategy was simple: an alliance between three participants. All the money would be given to one person who would play against the others.

If so, they would be able to win at Bluff Poker. Bluff Poker was a game played with money at first. After the money ran out, then the game would truly begin in earnest. The audience could watch as

blood was drawn and as the person slowly died. But if someone had 200 million won, then they could boldly play without fear of drawing their blood.

“Bluff Poker is literally a game of deception. It can best be described as Indian Poker. Either way, if you have 200 million, then you can win.”

It was a famous card game with the nickname Bluff Blindness. There would be a deck of 20 cards ranging from 1 to 10. Then a card would be placed on their forehead. The participant could only see the opponent's card without knowing their own. In that state, they would make bets. Watching a calm person lose their money and then start to draw blood was very funny. That's why it was one of the most popular games for the audience.

Tae-hyuk listened to the explanation before opening his mouth.

“This money represents our lives. How can we believe you?”

Cha Soo-hyun smiled and pulled a business card from his wallet. Written on it was the name of the famous poker player, Cha Soo-hyun.

“Can you keep a poker face when betting against a person holding a 2 of hearts? I can do it.”

“Cough! Still, I can't completely trust Cha Soo-hyun. This is a place where our lives are on the line.”

Cha Soo-hyun nodded with a grave expression.

“Yes, that’s right, so I prepared this contract. Do you want to check the details?”

Tae-hyuk received the piece of paper from Cha Soo-hyun.

“Um. The person who signs the contract will share all funds. If the person violates the agreement, then legal action will be taken.”

“Yes. If this exists then I can never betray you. How about it? Do you want to work together to escape this crazy game?”

Tae-hyuk made a worried expression. An Eun-jeong muttered in a small voice that she would leave all the decisions to him. Cha Soo-hyun didn’t miss this.

Tae-hyuk nodded and held out his hand.

“I’ve come to a conclusion. You are a poker player, and will do a lot better than someone like me. I will trust Cha Soo-hyun.”

“Hahaha. An excellent choice.”

The three people signed the contract prepared by Cha Soo-hyun. Cha Soo-hyun smiled at them. Naïve people would end up deceived in a place like this.

The contract he prepared was certainly legally valid. However, that only applied on the outside. In here, it was just like a piece of tissue paper. Entrusting their lives to such a thing... They were a really stupid couple!

“But how can we hand over the money?”

“Didn’t the person who gave it to you explain? They were probably busy and forgot. It’s simple. The badges have a tiny microphone built in that allows the audience to hear all of the conversations here. You can pass over your rights by handing it to someone else. If you agree, then the money will be passed onto to the other party.”

Cha Soo-hyun made the motion to hand something over.

“Ah! Indeed.”

At that time, Eun-jeong dropped the badge that she had been holding. Tae-hyuk bent over, picked it up, and bumped into Cha Soo-hyun’s body.

“Ah, I’m really sorry. Eun-jeong is a little clumsy.”

“Haha. It’s okay. Then, shall we exchange?”

Tae-hyuk first received all of the money from Eun-jeong. The

badge on his chest now said 115. Now it was Tae-hyuk's turn to hand everything over to Cha Soo-hyun.

“... I will take care of it.”

Cha Soo-hyun smiled after seeing Tae-hyuk's badge. Now he had to wait to receive permission from Tae-hyuk. Cha Soo-hyun made a satisfied expression after Tae-hyuk handed over his badge. Everything was going as planned.

“Yes. With this, the funds will be transferred to the other party. Do you agree?” Tae-hyuk's expression, that had been blank until now, suddenly changed as he asked the question.

At that moment, Cha Soo-hyun swallowed his saliva. He thought that this guy was a little bunny, but he was currently giving off the atmosphere of a predator.

It couldn't be... Was Cha Soo-hyun mistaken?

However, the other person's badge was in his hand. He was the one holding the knife, and there was nothing the other person could do.

“I agree. Then we are on the same team... As if! Hahaha! You were tricked by me!”

Cha Soo-hyun laughed. The calm and rational appearance that he had showed for a while disappeared. This place was a jungle of

deception, and blindly believing in someone was akin to jumping off of a cliff.

“Huh? What are you talking about?”

“Do you still not understand! You were deceived! Now all of this money is mine!”

“B-But the contract...”

“It will be time to pay the fee in a few minutes! If you don’t have 10 million won then you will be forced to cross the Bridge of Pain! Ahaha! Your bodies will melt into nothing!”

Tae-hyuk sank down with a blank expression.

“W-We were deceived?”

“N-No! I don’t want to die!”

An Eun-jeong shrieked with a desperate expression.

“Hahahaha! The dealers are coming to catch those who can’t pay the fee.”

Cha Soo-hyun chuckled and waved towards the men in black suits. They were wearing masks to hide their identities.

“Hey, why are you so late? Finish off this couple. What type of scene will occur in front of the Bridge of Pain? Hahaha!”

At that time, there was an announcement inside the Death Circus.

–Informing all participants. In a moment, 10 million won will be deducted from the money you are carrying. If you can't pay, then please accept that you will be forced to pay.

This is the third hour out of the eight hours of the Death Circus.

At that time, anybody who doesn't have the money to pay will be publicly executed.

“Hahaha! It is time for a fun execution! W-Wait a minute. What are you doing now? You should be...”

Three black suited men grabbed the laughing Cha Soo-hyun. One of the men in black suits said,

“Cha Soo-hyun. Your current balance is zero. You can't pay the fee, so we will enforce it. Take him away.”

“Yes!”



Cha Soo-hyun couldn't understand and started screaming.

“What are you talking about? I have money! It is 200 million!”

The black suited man explained with no emotion in his voice.

“You handed it to Lee Cheol-su's badge six minutes ago. Five minutes ago, you agreed to the statement that the funds would be transferred to the other person. It all belongs to Lee Cheol-su now.”

“W-wait a minute. What the hell?! I-I obviously...”

Cha Soo-hyun's face distorted as he looked at Tae-hyuk. Tae-hyuk smirked as he pulled a badge from his pocket and placed it on his chest. It now had the number '180' written on it.

“I-I obviously received your badge! This bastard! Shit! What?”

Tae-hyuk said.

“Ah, you mean that? It was a fake. For reference, I stole yours earlier. You definitely agreed to transfer ownership to me. Is there a problem?”

“Waaaaaah!”

Cha Soo-hyun screamed. He had accepted the badge of the opponent and agreed that money would be handed over to the other person. However, the badge he received was a fake. He had definitely checked it a few times...

In addition, Tae-hyuk said that he stole Cha Soo-hyun's badge. When on earth did he do that? Then when Cha Soo-hyun agreed...

“Yes. You agreed to hand me your money. This money will be very useful. Thank you.”

“Fuck! I was tricked! This bastard tricked me! What are you doing? Get that bastard! Catch him!”

The black suited men gagged Cha Soo-hyun before literally dragging him elsewhere. He would probably be forced to cross the Bridge of Pain.

Tae-hyuk spoke to Eun-jeong who was shivering behind him.

“Do you want to go and watch the Bridge of Pain?”

“No, I don't... But even if he is a scammer, trying someone and killing them...”

Tae-hyuk spoke casually.

“Anyone who wants to eat somebody should be prepared to have it happen to them.”

An Eun-jeong got goosebumps at that moment. She felt a deep abyss in the eyes of the man in front of her.

“... I thought you were Prince Charming who came to save me.”

Tae-hyuk answered naturally.

“Prince Charming? I’m sorry I didn’t live up to your expectations. I’m not such an upstanding person. Well, it is easier to think of me as a criminal catching other criminals.”

“A criminal catching other criminals...”

“Noona should be careful. You never know when you will be eaten by me.”

Tae-hyuk said before laughing.

He had a winning strategy. It wasn’t just the participants here. There were some criminals planted by Tiwai, like Cha Soo-hyun. They ate up other participants.

Tae-hyuk took out the Demon Revealing Mirror and checked the message. It was the name of his newly acquired seventh skill.

Crime Skill Counterfeit. The ability to make fakes. He used it to create a fake badge to trick Cha Soo-hyun.

Tae-hyuk watched the trembling Eun-jeong.

“Eh? It was just a joke... If you look like that, then I will really seem like a bad person. Ah, that’s right. Noona. Do you want to see a magic trick?”

## Chapter 51 – Death Circus #2

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‘The performance is clearly good... But no matter how I think about it, I picked a losing ticket.’

Tae-hyuk checked the crime skill while An Eun-jeong was taking a break.

He had invested 10 affinity points to receive a random skill. The ability that emerged was Counterfeit, a skill that was similar to the Forgery skill that he already had. However, there was a crucial difference between the two skills.

First of all, he didn’t need to make anything with the Counterfeit skill. Forgery was basically making something that already existed, and materials were needed to activate the ability. The more he knew about the original, the more complete the result.

Counterfeit was a skill that made something look different. He cut a piece of paper that was 154×68 mm and activated the Counterfeit skill, giving birth to a counterfeit bill of money.

Tae-hyuk laughed.

‘It is a big hit up to here...’

He had yelled with joy when he first saw the skill description. A perfect fake! If he used it well, then he could get a tremendous amount of wealth.

However, there was a problem. There were a few constraints on the Counterfeit skill.

‘... First, the duration.’

He could make a counterfeit bill with the skill, making it look like ordinary money.

The holograms and ink were perfectly converted, and there were even many anti-fake devices included on the bill, such as hidden images. In addition, it was fluorescent when looked at through an X-ray. All counterfeit money makers would want his method of production.

However, once it left Tae-hyuk’s hands, it would return to its original state after five minutes. So no matter how perfect the counterfeit money, he couldn’t even use it to buy a pack of gum. Furthermore, there was a limit to how many times he could use the skill. He couldn’t use it often, like he did with Gambling.

‘But it is the best skill to deceive a person in front of me.’

Tae-hyuk had perfectly tricked Cha Soo-hyun using the Counterfeit skill.

The method was simple. Tae-hyuk first received the badge from An Eun-jeong and transferred all the money to his badge. Then, he used An Eun-jeong’s blank badge to create a fake badge with the

number 115 on it. He used Robbery to take away the opponent's badge and agreed to transfer the money.

Cha Soo-hyun was covering his badge with a thick coat because he was reluctant to reveal his name and current revenue. That ended up choking him. He never noticed the important moment when his badge was stolen.

Tae-hyuk had acted the part of a boyfriend until the end. The result was a complete success.

‘Isn’t it a surprisingly usable skill? But X-ray Vision...’

Tae-hyuk kept lamenting about his missed opportunities to obtain X-ray Vision.

Tae-hyuk looked at Eun-jeong who had been sitting on the table for 10 minutes. She didn’t do it directly, but she had cooperated in deceiving someone. She seemed to have received a psychological shock.

Tae-hyuk exclaimed like he suddenly thought of something.

“Ah right. That reminds me, Noona’s badge should have melted with Cha Soo-hyun by now. But I don’t want to give you the money I borrowed. Then if Noona isn’t next to me, then you can’t pay the fee.”

Eun-jeong flinched at his words. It was a fact that Tae-hyuk

hadn't mentioned 20 minutes ago.

“.....”

Eun-jeong understood the point that Tae-hyuk wanted to make. Her life was now in Tae-hyuk's hands. If she did anything that was even a little annoying...

“I think that is enough rest. Would you like to gain some money? I have to pay for two people so I need to get 200 million won in an hour.”

“... Yes, I understand.”

“Then I will be going to Bluff Poker.”

Tae-hyuk turned and started to check the map. An Eun-jeong had goose bumps as she looked at his back.

The man called Lee Cheol-su felt worse than any criminal that she had ever met.

---

The atmosphere permeating throughout the room was not dissimilar to one of a masquerade ball. There were brightly shining chandeliers. The tables were filled with a variety of luxury foods.



Many guests dressed in colourful clothes were laughing. They wore a wide variety of masks.

A woman in an opera mask asked,

“Who will survive this time?”

Then a tuxedo wearing man with a lion mask replied,

“This stage has a small number of general participants and many wolves.”

They were told that the wolves were experts in various fields that were prepared by the organizers. They were hidden among the general participants.

“How many people have fallen into the pool?”

“Five people.”

“Omo, omo! Then it will just be a one-sided massacre!”

The reaction of the opera mask was natural. Wolves had experienced the Death Circus several times. If the general participants competed with them then it would just be a one-sided massacre.

“Yes. Do they know how much money we spent for this one night? There shouldn’t be more than two wolves.”

The lion mask sat on a chair and yawned like he was bored. Dozens of monitors were showing the Death Circus at the party. The crowd was gathered here to watch the Death Circus. The opera mask said with a sigh,

“I guess it can’t be helped. I wanted to see a fierce fight for survival... Today I just have to drink champagne while listening to the dying screams.”

“Well, I don’t dislike that either. Haha!”

The Death Circus was a very enjoyable spectacle. Humans killing humans. They questioned each other and took away what the person had. It was a primitive pleasure that couldn’t often be enjoyed.

They couldn’t help but admire Kim Joon-young’s attractions. They could see such a fun show, a privilege of the select few.

The opera mask and lion mask drank champagne while listening to the screams, not even bothering to watch the monitors. Then someone said,

“Uh, there was a tremendous ruckus right now. Is it okay not to watch it?”

The lion mask turned his gaze towards where the voice was heard. It was a young woman wearing a butterfly mask. She was in her early 20s or so? Long hair fell to her waist and her dress exposed her chest and shoulders.

“A butterfly...?”

“Ahaha. Is the mask cute? It is one of my favourites.”

The butterfly mask saw that the lion mask was in his 50s. However, that was the extent of information that was allowed to her by his mask. He wasn't a CEO in his 50s, but a person wearing a lion mask.

“Um. Well, it looks good.”

The lion mask looked at the face, where the butterfly mask only covered the eyes. The reason that guests wore masks was to hide their identity. Visiting the Death Circus wasn't a hobby that they could talk about proudly, which was why it was necessary to cover their faces. It was even more enjoyable if they could visit a place where they felt like extraordinary existences.

Kim Joon-young created a party that borrowed from a masquerade ball. There was no problem seeing the other people in masks.

Chaebols made up 0.1% of the population of South Korea. They often knew who a person was by the voice or shape of the body. In

such cases, they pretended not to know the other person, and called them by the name of the mask they were wearing. It was a type of tacit rule.

The Death Circus had been going on successfully for two years. However, this was the first time that a person had worn a butterfly mask that barely covered their face. Wasn't it the same as going unmasked?

The lion mask looked at the appearance of the butterfly mask. She was a considerable beauty. In addition, her chest was big. It seemed like she could be an idol singer right now.

“Um. This is a big deal. Was there such a young girl?”

The lion masked person laughed. Unknowingly, he started trying to figure out the identity of the butterfly mask. This was a place where it wasn't necessary. He could just refer to the person by the name of the mask and leave it to his desires.

The lion masked asked with a confused expression.

“A ruckus? What's going on?”

He had been a member of the Death Circus from the beginning, and had seen countless situations that could be considered extreme.

A young lady brutally killing others. Someone embracing the

person who betrayed them, and jumping into the acid pool together. Numerous incidents remained in lion mask's memory.

But a ruckus? No one would be surprised if a wolf was about to eat.

“The sheep ate the wolf. It was a great scene!”

“W-What?!”

The lion mask woke up. Such a momentous occasion had happened while he was drinking champagne?

“W-Who?! No, did they win by chance? Still, a sheep can't beat a wolf!”

Butterfly mask laughed smugly.

“Unfortunately, it wasn't recorded.”

“S-Sob!”

He had missed such a great scene. The lion mask groaned unpleasantly.

“Is it that disappointing?”

“I-It is natural. A sheep ate the wolf. This is the first time that it has happened in two years.”

“There is still a lot of time left before closing, so do you want to watch it now?”

The lion mask shook his head.

“No, this is a miracle that won’t happen again. They are going against pros. The miracle that allows ordinary people to win won’t come easily.”

“Is that really the case?”

“Well, it’s a good bet that the sheep will die. Butterfly Mask, do you know the name of the sheep?”

“Of course. Tae... No, Cheol-su.”

“Hahat! Cheol-su? That is a name that appeared in a Korean book. Yes. I have to see how long he lasts.”

The lion mask slowly walked to the monitor and searched for Lee Cheol-su. He was playing poker with someone at the table. The lion mask saw the face of the opponent and laughed.

“Haha. This is interesting. Is this the revenge of the wolves?”

The sheep Cheol-su was confronting another wolf.

“He has bad luck. I never imagined that he would meet two wolves consecutively.”

Then the butterfly mask said.

“Isn’t the sheep winning?”

The lion mask’s eyes widened and he looked at the monitor.

He didn’t see the moment that the first miracle happened. However, he saw the second one.

## Chapter 52 – Death Circus #3

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Three hours had passed since the Death Circus started. Kim Joon-young frowned as he watched the progress on the monitors.

He didn't like it.

“This is a stage that is lacking in beauty.”

There was no drama, nor was there a stunning victory. Usually, at least three times the amount of the current scenes would emerge.

All of this was due to that Choi Sung-yeol brat. Kim Joon-young had prepared the best stage and produced a variety of situations that would pull out human instincts and selfishness. Choi Sung-yeol's role was to gather the participants. It was a divided structure that took full advantage of both people's skills.

He usually put a wolf among 29 general participants before opening the Death Circus. However, the number of regular participants was exceptionally low this time. In the end, only 25 people were gathered. Two people entered shortly after it opened. In the end, he was forced to call five wolves in.

The result was this: nine people had already died, but none of the proper scenes came out.

In particular, Cha Soo-hyun was the worst. He cheated the



opponent with his words and took their money away. It wasn't fun or impressive.

Kim Joon-young wanted to see participants challenging the attractions. Betraying those who believed in them to take the money away, or people risking their lives on a last gamble for revenge. Kim Joon-young wanted such drama.

Humans were filled with desires, selfishness, and greed. These emotions were the best seasonings for the Death Circus. If Cha Soo-hyun was left alone, then he would completely ruin this stage.

This had to stop. Kim Joon-young pulled out his phone to deal with Cha Soo-hyun.

For him, sheep and wolves were both consumables. The most important thing was to create the best stage, and it was necessary to get rid of Cha Soo-hyun in order for that to happen.

Kim Joon-young suddenly got a good idea. If Choi Sung-yeol didn't act properly, then Kim Joon-young would recruit the participants. Most of the people prepared by Choi Sung-yeol were those on the verge of ruin due to their debts. There was a bitter taste and they lacked freshness.

What if he lied to a young woman on the street about becoming a model in order to make her follow him? Maybe he could abduct a child and force their parents to participate. That way, a drama that was several times better than the current one would be born.

Kim Joon-young decided to try it next time.

Then the phone was connected.

“It’s me. Replace a player. Take Cha Soo-hyun out right now.”

–S-Sorry but he has already been sent off...

A thick vein throbbed on Kim Joon-young’s forehead.

“Who told you to send him off?! This stage is mine. Without my permission...”

–It wasn’t me. He was forcibly ejected by another player.

“What?”

–He was deceived by a man called Lee Cheol-su and handed over all of his money to the other party.

Kim Joon-young’s face distorted. It was really unexpected, but Kim Joon-young decided to think of this as another opportunity.

“Hahat! That’s right. Isn’t a situation like this fun? Indeed, he was a black sheep.”

It was slang for a criminal hiding amongst the sheep. Kim Joon-

young's thoughts started to move rapidly. He had to take advantage of this situation and turn it into a great drama. It was the only way to save the stage that had been ruined.

“Yes. Deliver a message to all the wolves on stage right now. I will give a special bonus to those who hunt the black sheep.”

–Yes! I understand.

Cha Soo-hyun was the smallest of the wolves, since all he could do was move his mouth.

Kim Joon-young started laughing. How long could the black sheep last against the wolves, armed with solid teeth and sharp claws? He couldn't stand the anticipation.

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Hunt the black sheep.

This instruction was issued to the wolves. A special bonus would be given to the one who was successful. A huge 100 million won bounty. That was 50% of the sum that they needed to earn.

The wolves' eyes flashed. Although they were experts in various fields, this was the Death Circus, a place where they never knew what would happen. There wasn't a 100% guarantee that they would be safe. Even so, they decided to participate for the sake of making money. Of course, there were some wolves who liked the taste of sheep, but they were few in number.

‘I will get 100 million by catching Lee Cheol-su!’

That thought popped into the heads of all the wolves. If four wolves converged on the black sheep at the same time, then he could be easily eliminated. Of course, they had no intention of doing that.

The Producer would be angry that the spectacle that he created had been suppressed. Everything they did was in the name of the entertainment of the guests.

The remaining four wolves prepared to catch the black sheep.

---

There were monitors of various sizes in the ballroom. They could see images from hundreds of cameras. If they chose a place that they wanted to watch, then it would be displayed.

The guests could pick the participant that suited their tastes. But now, the same person was showing on every monitor. All the masked people wanted to see him. In the end, they all assembled at the biggest monitor to watch the showdown between the black sheep and a wolf in Bluff Poker.

The opera mask said,

“For those of you who just arrived, I will briefly explain the

situation. The sheep on the screen has just eaten a wolf. His name is Lee Cheol-su.”

The masked people were dismayed.

“The younger one?”

“Yes. It seems like he hasn’t even gone to the army yet.”

“Looking at those clothes, he looks like a good-for-nothing neighbourhood punk...”

“Did he really eat a wolf?”

The opera mask clapped, forcing everyone else to fall silent.

“The game is Bluff Poker, everybody’s favorite game. Lee Cheol-su has 180 million right now. Let’s see, the wolf... He has 90 million.”

“What? Isn’t that close to 200 million? What’s going on?”

The opera mask’s eyes narrowed at the question from another masked person.

“I was surprised at first as well. Such an amount means that he will have an overwhelming lead over the wolf. However, that isn’t

the case. In fact, the game hasn't even started yet. This is the result of taking that woman and Cha Soo-hyun's money."

Those who had questions were convinced and nodded.

"He looks like a punk, but it is kind of good? By default, he has the advantage in Bluff Poker."

"With this amount, then he might win again."

The opera mask refuted the people talking.

"Do you think the Producer wouldn't take action?"

Opera mask manipulated the monitor to see the wolves. There were two men in their 30s. The masked people shouted as they remembered their faces.

"The Park Tae-soo and Park Dae-soo brothers!"

"Yes. The brother wolves have gathered to catch the sheep."

"T-This is a jackpot!"

The masked people shrieked.

The Tae-soo and Dae-soo brothers were famous card sharks

known for working together.

“Yes. Each brother has 90 million. They always go against another person and win. It might be the same in this situation.”

Tae-soo was known for his poker face that never lost its calm, no matter the circumstances, while Dae-soo had a keen eye for reading the opponent's cards. Of course, dexterity was a basic thing for both of them. If the two of them combined their strengths, they became a team that no other card shark could compete with. It was a confrontation between the sheep who took Cha Soo-hyun's money and the gambling brothers.

A huge battle was about to happen. The opera mask manipulated the monitor towards the viewpoint of the table.

“The game seems to be started straight away.”

A time limit existed in the Death Circus. Thus, all the games were fast paced. Bluff Poker needed a dealer so a man in a black suit came and started to mix the cards.

It was two sets from 1-10. That was a total of 10 games. The number of cards meant it was relatively easy to count the cards.

It was Tae-soo who participated in the match. The lion mask sat on a chair and stared at the screen in front of him as he spoke. The opera mask next to him was in charge of commentary.

“This match is important, so the brother with the good poker face emerged before the other one.”

“That’s right.”

“The basic bet is 10 million.”

“Hoh. Isn’t it usually one million?”

“They know that the opponent has a lot of money. It’s an action designed to end this quickly.”

The opera mask laughed.

“So if they run out of money, they will need to bet 100ml of blood. One litre of blood might be pulled out.”

“Haha! I am looking forward to it. It will be a really exciting match.”

The card was placed in front of Cheol-su and Tae-soo. The two men put the card on their forehead. They could see the opponent’s card but not their own. Betting or withdrawing would now begin.

“Cheol-su has a 3 of spades, and Tae-soo has an 8 of clubs.”

Cheol-su bet 10 million, even though his opponent’s card was



quite high. Tae-soo maintained his poker face and followed the call. In the end, Tae-soo won. In a time that was shorter than a minute, Tae-soo had won 20 million.

“Indeed, a professional gambler. He figured out his opponent’s playing style, and is playing calmly.”

The next game immediately started. The masked people sighed as they saw the cards on both foreheads.

Cheol-su had a 10 of spades. The strongest card. It would win no matter what card the opponent had. However, this was Bluff Poker. Only the opponent could see the card.

“Oh my god... Tae-soo pulled a 9 of clubs. I think this game is over.”

The situation was very fun.

And 9 of clubs and a 10 of spades were going against each other. Tae-soo saw the opponent’s 10 of spades and had to decide if he would bluff or forfeit. If he chose to bluff, then he would have to risk a high bet. In the case of Cheol-su, he might withdraw when seeing that the opponent had a 9 of clubs. The game depended on whether Tae-soo bluffed or forfeited.

[Indian Poker](#), the base of Bluff Poker, had a special rule. Those who forfeited after drawing a 10 of spades would have to pay 10 times the base money.

## Bluff Poker

It is from a Korean variety show called the Genius, with the participants being Kim Gura, a famous Korean comedian and Hong Jin-ho, a former pro Starcraft player under the alias of YellOw and is famous for always coming second to BoxeR.

For those interested in watching the series, here is a [youtube link](#) for the first season. It is very good variety show so please watch it if you are interested.

The masked people listened to what Tae-soo would do. Each participant had a miniature microphone built into their badges. They could hear the conversation through it.

-I will bet 100 million.

“Ohh! Bluff!”

Tae-soo had drastically raised the ante by 10 times. If this occurred, then the opponent had to hesitate. If Cheol-su called, he might lose more than two thirds of his money. In addition, Tae-soo's face hadn't changed the moment he made a bluff. He was a person who could fool a lie detector.

The lion mask said,

“Cheol-su will withdraw. The experience itself is too different.”

“That’s right. Eh? Cheol-su is saying something instead of withdrawing!”

The lion mask swallowed his saliva and listened.

-You are called Tae-soo? You aren’t pretending to be a regular participant but aren’t you actually a card shark?

Tae-soo looked at Cheol-su with an expressionless face.

-Have you heard of someone called Kim Shin-hyeong?

Tae-soo finally opened his mouth.

-I’ve heard rumours. He is a pretty good gambler.

-In fact, I’ve fought against him.

-Hrmm.

-You aren’t curious about the result?

-I would have heard if you won.

Cheol-su... No, Seo Tae-hyuk said with a smile.

–I'll tell you right away. I won perfectly. Then I will call 100 million.

Wodangdang!

All the masked people watching the monitor stood up in shock. The food in their bowls fell to the ground. It was a completely unexpected situation. He bet a large sum of money, despite the opponent holding a 9 of clubs. A person would never agree to that call, unless they were confident they had picked a 10 of clubs.

But how...?

Tae-soo got up and threw the chips that he was using as money at Tae-hyuk.

–This bastard... You are cheating.

–Let's move on. By the way, it is amazing. I will pick another 10.

–Shit. You're barking nonsense. I will definitely find out what trick you used.

The dealer handed out the cards. Tae-hyuk also pulled a 10 this time.

The crowd cheered as they watched it. The ballroom had become

a complete mess. Thus, they didn't realize that the butterfly mask, who informed them of Cheol-su's existence, had disappeared.

## Chapter 53 – Death Circus #4

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Tae-hyuk looked calm, but he was inwardly sighing with relief. He made SY Capital suffer through the casino, which was their main source of revenue. He intended to break Tiwai in the same manner.

However, infamous criminals, Choi Sung-yeol and Kim Joon-young, were behind Tiwai. The scale itself was different. He couldn't solve this case alone. He needed to work inside and outside the Death Circus at the same time. He needed reliable allies. They needed to have courage and the ability to deceive others.

Tae-hyuk confirmed that the identical screen on the Demon Revealing Mirror was still open. His ally had sent him a message.

‘Well... I think that Moonlight Flower is better...’

At first, he thought about getting Big Mama to help. She would perfectly fulfill the role, but Tae-hyuk still couldn't trust her. She was a woman who could betray him at any time, so he chose Moonlight Flower instead.

There was a little bit of insecurity, but once Tae-hyuk compiled all the information he knew, at least she wouldn't betray him. The biggest problem was that it was impossible to communicate with people from inside the Death Circus.

It was for the sake of confidentiality. If a phone could be used

inside, then anyone would ask for help. In order to maintain the Death Circus, it was absolutely necessary to stop that from happening. In the end, a space was built that didn't even allow radio waves through.

However, Tae-hyuk had the crime skills. With the Spying skill, he could see the state of an object from a remote place. He used passwords to enable simple communication.

‘The A8, K9, and T4 panels are broken, meaning that there are two wolves remaining.’

Tae-hyuk started a simple stretch to relax.

Moonlight Flower bought a ticket to the Death Circus through Big Mama. She appeared as a guest and told Tae-hyuk the entire situation. If he had something to say to Moonlight Flower, then he would do a pre-determined action on camera.

All of Tae-hyuk's actions were recorded on camera. He took advantage of this. This was only possible for Tae-hyuk who had the crime skills.

If Tae-hyuk raised a finger, then Moonlight Flower would tell him the cards of the both of them. It would be a strange situation if he lost.

For this, he invested his remaining affinity points and bought a trait for the Spying skill. The palm-sized screen that was projected

into the air was the new ability of the Spying skill.

‘It is easy since I can see the contents without looking at the Demon Revealing Mirror.’

It was unfortunate that he spent all of his 13 points in a day, but the utilization was endless. The Demon Revealing Mirror looked like a strange mirror on the surface. In order to use his crime skills, he had to manipulate it directly. This was no problem if it was a usual situation, but in a situation where even one small act could arouse suspicion, it served as a big penalty.

In the match against Kim Shin-hyeong, if he had any doubts about the Demon Revealing Mirror, then Tae-hyuk wouldn't have been able to win.

The game that Tae-hyuk was playing now was Bluff Poker. Placing the mirror on the table was like declaring that he could see the card on his forehead.

That's why he had invested three affinity points into the screen. If he concentrated his mind, then he could project a simplified image into the air. Now he didn't need to look into the mirror.

‘I won't be treated as a pervert holding a mirror.’

Tae-hyuk laughed and started provoking his opponent in Bluff Poker.



“Tae-soo. Do you want to raise your bet even though you are holding a 9? Um. I think my card is a 4. Is that right?”

His opponent trembled, as Tae-hyuk knew his exact card. Park Tae-soo clenched his teeth. It was the first time that his poker face broke.

“This bastard...”

Without realizing it, Bluff Poker had reached the mid-game. The card that Tae-hyuk placed on his forehead was exactly a 4.

Tae-soo didn't know how he could find out his card. Was it because he counted the remaining cards? That seemed like the most likely option. However, that didn't explain the consecutive 10s. What trick...?

Moreover, were his words before just a bluff? Or did he really have the number 9? The two 10 cards were already gone. Having a 9 meant unconditionally winning, but it would be impossible to turn the situation around if it was a lie. In the end, Tae-soo gave up this game.

“Aigoo. Thank you for the 10 million won.”

Tae-soo wanted to pull away Cheol-su's laughing expression. However, this was one of the few places where violence was banned in the Death Circus. Tae-soo wanted to quickly check his hand for a second.

A 2 or a 3... It would be easy for Cheol-su's 4 to beat it. The opponent was bluffing. He sensed it using his insight.

“Kuaaaaak!”

Tae-soo screamed as he saw the number 9 card.

Then Tae-hyuk said again.

“I wasn't lying earlier. If you feel doubt, then you will self-destruct. Why don't you believe your opponent for once?”

Bluff Poker was a game to deceive the opponent. With bold bets, they could make the other person die even with a strong hand. However, Tae-hyuk didn't bluff once and still achieved a complete victory over Tae-soo.

Tae-soo had accumulated pride in his skills as a card shark over his long life. In the end, Tae-soo completely collapsed. He still had 20 million left, but he gave up the match.

Tae-hyuk looked at the older brother, Dae-soo.

“In cases like this, the older brother normally gets revenge for messing with his younger brother. What will you do?”

“Kuock!”

Dae-soo's face distorted.

Both people had started the game with 180 million. But at 10 times the stake, 150 million was lost in just 20 minutes. There was only 20,000 left. The next fee payment time was approaching, and the 20,000 was their last resort. In addition, if they ran out of money then they would have to bet with their blood. It was suicide if he didn't know the method the opponent used to read the cards.

Dae-soo suppressed his anger and said.

“Don't think that this is over. This stage is just starting. I would find out what trick you're using and beat you with my own hands.”

“Well, you spoke long words but are you surrendering? I have suffered a lot. Anyway, I am quite busy.”

Tae-hyuk pointed to his badge that had increased to 340 and left the Bluff Poker stadium.

What? Suffered a lot? The gambling brothers howled out Lee Cheol-su's name.

---

“W-What did you do?”

An Eun-jeong asked in a careful tone. The Death Circus was a place where people risked their lives to gain 10 million won. Yet Cheol-su had gained 160 million in just 20 minutes. She couldn't believe it despite seeing it with her own eyes. It felt like a dream.

“Ah, perhaps...”

An Eun-jeong pinched herself just in case. In fact, it didn't make sense. A death game couldn't be happening in South Korea.

“Ahat!”

But unfortunately, it was a reality.

Tae-hyuk pointed to Eun-jeong's badge and raised a finger to his lips before speaking in a small voice.

“I have to keep it a secret.

“Ah... The badges are fitted with microphones. Yes, I understand.”

Eun-jeong sighed with regret. The masked people listening to their conversation through the monitor responded in the same manner.

Tae-hyuk nodded with a thankful face.

“Then now what? We already have 360 million... Just a little bit more and the both of us can escape together...”

Eun-jeong spoke in a stammering tone. She wanted to get out of here quickly. But Cheol-su shot that down.

“We can’t get out of this place just yet. From now on...”

Tae-hyuk paused and pulled out a notebook from his pocket. He kept his back to the camera so they couldn’t see what he wrote.

An Eun-jeong’s face turned pale as she saw what he wrote.

It was different for the guests wearing the masks.

---

“What, what? What just happened?”

“He doesn’t intend to leave just yet?”

“What the hell is his reason?”

“Oh, why isn’t he saying? Bring that Kim Joon-young bastard here right now!”

“Eh? The woman’s face is turning white! I think she read

something great!”

“Oh, I want to know as well!”

“Please let me hear it!”

The guests were frustrated. They had been like gods watching everything that happened in the Death Circus, yet these gods were being fooled by the man called Lee Cheol-su. Unlike the other excited people, the lion mask withdrew for his own analysis.

“Maybe he knows the system perfectly. In addition, he has tremendous skills. Who the hell is he? Hmmm. He is called Lee Cheol-su?”

The lion mask decided to use his power to find out the identity of Lee Cheol-su. He pulled out a phone from his pocket. Right now, dozens of people were being mobilized in order to find out information on Cheol-su.

He would just relax and wait. Political power was useful for incidents like this.

The lion mask smiled with satisfaction and leaned back in his chair.

---

An Eun-jeong raised her hands to her mouth as she read the

content listed in the notebook.

It was so surprising that Cheol-su had conveyed it in writing. There were exactly two sentences written.

–The other people.

–Save all of them.

Many people still remained in the Death Circus, yet Cheol-su was saying that he would save all of them. Just two people alone needed 400 million to go free. In the first place, all of the money that entered the Death Circus was one billion.

The reduction of 10 million won an hour was no joke. It was a situation where Cheol-su had already obtain half of the money present. All of the money in the Death Circus was being used to extend their own lives, and they could barely think about escaping. Although everyone in the Death Circus basically started with 50 million won, the eight hour fee alone was 80 million won. It was a situation where money was being consumed just by resting.

This place was designed like that from the beginning. In the end, only one or two people would be able to get out alive. For the most part, they were the wolves that Kim Joon-young hired.

Cheol-su had come here to help her, yet he wanted to save the remaining people? It was an impossible task.

An Eun-jeong felt dizzy at the thought. Tae-hyuk looked at Eun-jeong with a relaxed face and declared.

“I’m sorry, but Noona can’t return home yet. The night has just begun.”

200 million won was enough to get Eun-jeong out of here. If it was just that much money, then he would have chosen an attraction that he was familiar with, one that he knew how to beat.

However, he couldn’t finish it with just escaping. He had to smash the Death Circus and Tiwai International in order to save Seo Ha-ran and An Eun-jeong. As a bonus, he would catch the two criminals, Kim Joon-young and Choi Sung-yeol, who were on the blacklist.

There were still two wolves hiding in this place. Maybe one of them was the criminal that made the perfume that confused the senses. There was still a huge amount of work to do here.

He felt sorry towards An Eun-jeong but he needed a little more time.

Until the closing of the Death Circus – 260 minutes.



# Chapter 54 – Black Sheep Exodus #1

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The participants in the Death Circus had a moment when they wished they had refused to join.

It was the time when the fee needed to be paid every hour. Of course, it wasn't pleasurable to risk their lives by challenging difficult attractions or by paying money to other people. But it was a choice they could make with their own will. At the very least, it was their money, not their lives, that was being taken away.

If they knew that there was this nonsensical system in the first place, then no one would have signed the application. But most of them had been thinking about suicide because they didn't have the money to pay off their debts. Some were fooled by the idea of making big money from this.

Yoon Jong-hyun was stuck here for a similar reason.

“I can't die until I kill that Choi Sung-yeol bastard!”

The Death Circus was a hell that appeared in reality.

Yoon Jong-hyun had a fairly good head. He realized that based on the rules of this place, most of the participants would die. In the near future, he might end up suffering from a painful end. Thus, it would be better to commit suicide with his own hands early on.

However, Yoon Jong-hyun's hatred for Choi Sung-yeol kept him

alive. Sometimes vengeance was a driving force in life.

But now it was the end. The remaining number on his badge was 5. Five million won. It was the cost of living comfortably for a few months on the outside. However, in here, it wouldn't even keep him alive for an hour.

So instead of getting revenge on Choi Sung-yeol who lied to him, 20 minutes later he would be challenging the attraction of death. Just when Yoon Jong-hyun was in the midst of despair, someone spoke to him.

“I guess you don't have enough money to pay the fee.”

Yoon Jong-hyun replied in a loud voice.

“Yes. Are you asking that after seeing the badge on my chest? Stop joking...”

Yoon Jong-hyun trailed off as he saw the badge on the opponent's chest.

“3...300 million!”

If his eyes were wrong, then 360 was clearly written on there. The money needed to get out of here was 200 million. A huge amount of 160 million would remain after he escaped. Yoon Jong-hyun realized that the young man in front of him could save his life.

Yoon Jong-hyun literally fell to the ground. Then he grabbed the pants of the other person.

“P-Please. Can you give me a little bit of money? No, please help me. 30... No, if you lend me 20 million then I will pay back double the amount. Please...”

His life was at stake. Yoon Jong-hyun looked at the person’s badge. It stated that his name was Lee Cheol-su.

“Teacher Cheol-su...! It is a request!”

Tae-hyuk coughed a few times and said as smoothly as possible.

“You don’t need to do this. First of all, listen to my words.”

“W-what...?”

“If you do a few things for me, then I will pay your fee. How about it?”

Yoon Jong-hyun didn’t answer right away, since Cheol-su could be trying to trick him. Furthermore, even though he didn’t have any money, he might be a bait to deceive others. This was the Death Circus after all. It wasn’t easy to trust a person in a place like this. But even so, there was nothing else he could do in his rotten situation.

“I know what you are thinking. You can listen to my words and not do it if you don’t like it. I want you to collect all the people who are in danger because they don’t have enough money. Of course, we don’t want them to play the final game.”

“This means...”

“Yes. I will pay all of their fees. If you look at the money I have then you know that it is possible.”

“O-Oh my god... God...”

“At any rate, there isn’t much time remaining, so please hurry. I will explain more once the people are gathered here.”

“.....!”

“You can treat me as a scammer, but there is no other choice.”

Yoon Jong-hyun nodded as he looked at the face of his saviour.

“Yes! I-I understand!”

Yoon Jong-hyun thought about it as he ran around. If the other person had used more plausible words then he wouldn’t have trusted them. However, the man called Cheol-su said that Jong-hyun could doubt him as much as he wanted. It strangely gave him

a sense of trust. It was the opposite of Choi Sung-yeol's method of luring people with sweet words.

Tae-hyuk confirmed the time as he was left alone. He had said the same thing to three people apart from Yoon Jong-hyun. If they moved in a hurry, then it wouldn't be too late to gather the people. Every minute and second was precious.

Tae-hyuk looked at the camera and laughed.

---

10 minutes ahead of the payment time, six people were gathered in front of him. They were all people in danger because they didn't have enough money for the fee payment. They looked at Tae-hyuk like he was their saviour.

Tae-hyuk said.

“You were deceived.”

There was a huge uproar.

“W-What?”

“Are you deceiving us now?”

“T-This bastard...”

However, Tae-hyuk's 360 million didn't change. They couldn't do anything but count down the minutes.

Tae-hyuk replied with a smile.

"I had decided to give the fee to you. But in the end, that idea isn't enough."

"W-What do you mean?"

"First of all, let me tell you my purpose."

Tae-hyuk briefly looked at the six people. Most of them were men in their 30~40s. They had little or no money. They swallowed their saliva and waited for Tae-hyuk to speak.

"I want to escape from the Death Circus with everyone."

".....!"

Tae-hyuk had collected six people using the bait of 10 million won.

The reason was simple. Right now, there shouldn't be a wolf hiding in this group. It was a collection of specifically selected people.

There were two conditions.

They should have no money. A person who couldn't do anything before the thought of death.

The people who satisfied these conditions absolutely couldn't be wolves. The only woman among the gathered people raised her hand. She was a timid-looking woman in her early 30s.

“W-Will you really save us?”

“That will be the result.”

“Ah... Thank you... Thank you very much...!”

The woman bowed until her head was touching the ground.

‘...Ugh. H-Her chest all of a sudden...’

At that moment, Tae-hyuk's conscience showed itself. It wasn't simply through goodwill that Tae-hyuk wanted to help these people escape. It was so that he could break the Death Circus and Tiwai. He gathered this crowd as part of his plan.

‘You are being used! Don't look at me with such expressions of respect! I'm a bad person!’

Tae-hyuk wanted to shout those words, but he stopped himself. The rules that Kim Joon-young created for the Death Circus were absolute. There were many masked witnesses watching.

However, if the death penalty ended and all guests disappeared, then this promise would be discarded. No matter how much money he made here, he wouldn't be able to take it outside. It would just turn into a piece of data on the badge.

In the end, he had to finish everything while the guests were still here.

Those who didn't know that Tae-hyuk was plotting a wicked conspiracy spoke with touched expressions.

“I-I really want to escape from here...”

“Bringing out all the participants...”

Yoon Jong-hyun, who was mixed among the people, opened his mouth.

“If this succeeds then it will be a miracle like the Exodus.

“Exodus?”

“Yes. The Exodus from the bible. Moses received a revelation



from god and took those who were slaves to escape from Egypt. He took them to a land of paradise. Doesn't that seem like the exact same situation now?"

"Ah..."

"Hmm."

Tae-hyuk coughed at Yoon Jong-hyun. He was now treated as Moses. However, no matter how many crime skills he had, he couldn't split the sea in two.

There was only one thing he could do.

"Then I will give each of you 10 million won and put you in Group A. After this fee settlement is over, I want you to spread this fact to others in the Death Circus. Everybody has a means of escape."

"T-That is all you need?"

"Yes. The next instructions will be in 20 minutes."

"I-I understand."

Those who received money from Tae-hyuk bowed their heads and ran to other places in the Death Circus.

“Hu...”

There was a way for all participants to live. That information would surely spread around the Death Circus in an instant. It was what Tae-hyuk was aiming at.

The participants would no longer need to take part in dangerous attractions or gambling. They had a new hope that they could leave this place alive.

Once that happened, the remaining wolves wouldn't be able to hunt. They would hide their identities and approach Tae-hyuk.

Thus, he invested 20 minutes to gather the Group A. People who couldn't hurt others despite being in a dangerous situation. They absolutely weren't wolves. They would be the main axis for the Exodus.

Tae-hyuk finally contacted Moonlight Flower, who was the most important figure of this operation. He smiled at the surveillance camera and made a shooting motion with his fingers.

It meant to report the current situation. Of course, it also provoked the people watching him.

The reply arrived in seconds.

-It was destroyed by a strong shock.

Tae-hyuk smiled as he saw the message on the Demon Revealing Mirror. The content of the message sent by Moonlight Flower was simple.

-No problem!

Tae-hyuk was inside while Moonlight Flower was outside. The operation to crush the Death Circus was progressing gradually.

---

The wolf hid among the sheep.

Of course, it was in order to eat the black sheep.

---

Tae-hyuk looked at the gathered people.

Group A had done well and almost all of the living participants of the Death Circus were gathered. There were exactly two people missing.

‘Indeed, the Tae-soo and Dae-soo brothers aren’t here.’

Wounded wolves would be eaten by other wolves. Maybe they already...

“I think you know why I gathered you here.”

Then one participant shouted.

“Are you really going to save us from this place?”

“It could be as a result.”

“What do you mean?”

“I am going to escape from the Death Circus from now on. I will take all the people here with me. But there is something you have to do for that to happen.”

“.....!”

The gathered people started buzzing again.

“You can’t escape from here using normal methods. In order to get out, you need to collect 200 million according to Kim Joon-young’s rules. I’m not a saviour. I’m just going to give you a definite path.”

It was at that moment. The wolf hiding in Group B walked forward.

“Doesn’t that mean we have to participate in dangerous attractions after all? How can we believe you? Aren’t you a spy sent by the organizers of the Death Circus? Everybody is deceived by that man. If you follow him, then you will die.”

“.....!”

The words were plausible.

The man who was throwing suspicion towards Tae-hyuk. Tae-hyuk confirmed his name.

‘Kim Jun-tae.’

It was strangely similar to someone’s name. Tae-hyuk narrowed his eyes and looked at the other person.

## Chapter 55 – Black Sheep Exodus #2

---

He was a man who gave off a sharp impression. Jun-tae continued to point out the loopholes.

“He might be leading you down a path but it might be heading towards a cliff.”

At that moment, someone who had been listening quietly sneered at Jun-tae.

“Then are you saying you have a better idea?”

It was the only woman in Group A, Jeon Mina. Mina showed complete trust in Tae-hyuk.

“No, but... I want to see more tangible evidence.”

“Is that so? I know people like you. You can’t help but feel envious when you see someone doing well. In the end, you will ruin everyone because of your pride.”

Jun-tae’s face distorted at Mina’s acidic tone.

“I saw all of you moving together! Perhaps this is a plan to screw everyone else?”

“I-Isn’t he a wolf planted by Choi Sung-yeol?”

In no time, the crowd split into two groups and started fighting. It was clearly an urgent situation. There was an internal conflict in the group when they should be trying to escape.

Tae-hyuk sighed and intervened between those who were fighting.

“Mina. Jun-tae. Both of you calm down. First of all, listen to my plan before you make a decision.”

Jun-tae looked at him and shouted.

“So that plan can kill all of us!”

“Why are you so suspicious? You should trust someone for once. Cheol-su used his own money to save those of us who were in a life-threatening situation. Let’s see... Omo. Do you have 70 million right now? That is why you are so relaxed. Ah, perhaps...”

Mina eyed Jun-tae suspiciously before walking over to Tae-hyuk and whispering something in his ears.

“Isn’t it obvious that there would be a wolf planted by Tiwai here?”

Tae-hyuk nodded quietly.

“Then isn’t he the most suspicious? He has a lot of money and he’s also planting suspicion. No matter how I look at it, he has to be the wolf. It would be better to get rid of such people before going through with the Exodus.

“Hrmm...”

Tae-hyuk paused for a moment before answering.

“I’m sorry, but I can’t do that. While there are definitely wolves among us, if we are suspicious of each other then it is what the wolf wants. First of all, I am thinking of taking everyone with me.”

“Oh, then the wolf...”

“I said I would take them all.”

Mina’s protests died down at Tae-hyuk’s strong will.

“Yes... I understand.”

Tae-hyuk activated the Voice Modulation skill.

[Voice Modulation has been used.]

-You can imitate the voice of Kim Bum-soo.



---

Kim Bum-soo was an actor who often appeared in historical dramas. He mainly played the role of the king. It was the charismatic voice that really made him seem like a king of the Joseon Dynasty.

There were two groups in front of Tae-hyuk's eyes. In order to bring them together, he would use Kim Bum-soo's voice.

“Please pay attention. Right now, there are those who believe in me. There are also those who feel doubt. The two groups exist, and I can understand both. I was afraid after entering the Death Circus. All of you can't be sure that the path you are walking on is correct. Therefore, I will walk in front. Right now, I am going to challenge the 'Puzzle House.' After that, you can decide whether to follow me and clear it, or to give up. I'm just suggesting a path.”

“Y-You will challenge first? We won't be used as sacrifices to identify the winning strategy?”

“Yes. You can also choose the order that you desire. Anyways, I am planning to escape with everyone. “

“Ah...!”

The contents absolutely weren't trivial

This was something that often occurred at military training grounds. A demonstration by a skilled assistant.

However, his voice was overflowing with charisma. The combination of the voice and the words gave them a strange sense of trust. This guy could help them leave with their lives. Such sentiments formed in the minds of the gathered people.

“By the way, Boss! All of a sudden, your voice has changed, making it seem like a god!”

Someone suddenly called Tae-hyuk ‘Boss’. Tae-hyuk released the Voice Modulation skill.

“Haha. I took some classes on eloquence in the past, and I tried to use some of it just now.”

“I see. At any rate, I believe in Boss. Show us how to escape.”

Tae-hyuk slowly nodded. Jun-tae’s expression showed that he couldn’t understand it as he muttered.

“It’s just one speech...”

As the wave of suspicion disappeared, Jun-tae was forced to follow quietly. Mina looked at him with suspicious eyes until the end. The root of the problem still hadn’t disappeared.

---

The Puzzle House, one of the most notorious Death Circus attractions.

In a sealed room, there was a structure that kept displaying puzzles on a monitor. The problem was the level of difficulty. One by one, the levels were manageable. However, a person had to challenge a few times in a row. There were also hundreds of patterns.

If any mistakes happened, then a guillotine would fall and one part of the body would be cut off.

First, the fingers. Then, the arms. In the end...

There was no dropping out in the middle.

The most terrible thing was to confirm the right answer with a body part in the guillotine. That body part would be cut off if the answer turned out to be incorrect. Body parts were cut off without any anesthesia. A pronounced shock that led to death would often occur.

The Puzzle House was a large glass box, so it was a structure that completely showed what was happening inside. The Puzzle House's prize was 50 million won. All they needed to do was come out of it alive. The amount was overwhelmingly high compared to other attractions.

At first, there was a man who challenged the Puzzle House. He

was a Mensa member with an IQ of higher than 140. He focused and made it to the middle part of the puzzles. However, he made a mistake with one puzzle.

The five fingers that he placed in the guillotine were cut off. The funny thing was that he would remain alive as long as the injuries were treated. Of course, this wasn't because they cared for the participants. It was to make sure that the participant didn't die easily so that the guests could enjoy it for a long time.

The treated man looked stunned. However, if he concentrated, then he could clear the rest of the problems without losing anything other than his fingers.

But that wasn't it. The man knew it. If he made a mistake, then he would die. This thought weighed down on him like heavy shackles on his body. He collapsed in an instant. He was worried that the right answer was too obvious and chose the wrong answer.

Arms... Legs... In the end, his neck...

He was one of the best participants in the Death Circus and he lost his head. After witnessing that, no participants challenged the Puzzle House.

After three hours passed, a second challenger appeared.

Seo Tae-hyuk. As Tae-hyuk entered the Puzzle House, he saw a

bearded man sitting in a corner.

“Are you going to challenge?”

“There are many people waiting. Let’s start straight away.”

“Haha...”

Tae-hyuk sat on the chair in the middle of the Puzzle House and placed one arm in a small guillotine. It was a tool for cutting off the fingers. Guillotines made for cutting off the arms, legs and heads were also inside the room.

As he sat down on the chair, the first problem appeared on the wall-mounted monitor. The first problem had a simple level of difficulty.

Question 1)  $2+2*2=$

Tae-hyuk put his brain into full operation and came up with the answer. He manipulated the panel and chose the number 6.

The terrible Puzzle House began.

---

“T-The right answer once again!”

“Oh my god!”

“How many problems has it been so far?”

“27...28!”

The crowd outside cheered as they saw Tae-hyuk solving the problems. They were dubious at first but their voices gradually rose as Tae-hyuk solved the problems one by one. The great thing wasn't that he was solving all the problems. He was doing everything at a tremendous speed.

“Uh, how could he solve that problem in one second?”

“B-Boss is a genius! No, it isn't a genius level. It's like he knew all the problems already!”

“A-Amazing!”

They could live. If they followed the Boss then they could get out of here. Hope filled the faces of the participants.

“A-All 30 questions are correct...! The Puzzle House is cleared... He did it without getting hurt at all!”

For the first time, cheers rang out in the Death Circus.

“Waaaaaaaah!”

Tae-hyuk got up and spoke to the bearded man.

“Please prepare for the next guest.”

“Huh? Oh, yes!”

The bearded man replied with a stunned expression. He had been responsible for the Puzzle House for two years, yet this was the first time he saw a person clear this place. He was sure that it would never occur again in the future.

Tae-hyuk slowly walked out of the Puzzle House and said,

“How is it? Simple right?”

“Wahhhhh!”

50 million won in 10 minutes.

There were some who shed tears at Tae-hyuk’s tremendous achievement. However, Jun-tae still had a sour expression on his face as he spoke.

“This is even more suspicious. It seemed like you knew all the problems. You are in fact a spy planted here by the organizers...

hup hup”

The person next to Jun-tae blocked his mouth.

“Boss! Never mind this brat. Then a second person will enter right?”

“That’s right.”

“Then who...”

“I would like someone to volunteer.”

“Cough! Who wants to enter the Puzzle House next?”

“.....”

No matter how overwhelming Tae-hyuk’s victory was, no one was willing to go. Once another person entered the Puzzle House, Tae-hyuk planned to tell them the right answers. However, if Tae-hyuk was truly a spy, then he would likely reveal his true colours with the next participant. The third was less likely than the second...

While everyone was busy thinking...

Someone walked forward. It was An Eun-jeong who was hiding in



the crowd.

“I will be the second person.”

“Ohh! This young lady? Fighting!”

Sighs of relief were heard.

An Eun-jeong had infinite trust in Tae-hyuk, just like Mina. She had been quiet, but now it was her turn. Eun-jeong swallowed her saliva as she looked at Tae-hyuk.

“Uh...?”

However, Tae-hyuk had a strange look on his face.

“I want to say something before An Eun-jeong enters.”

“Huh? W-what...?”

Tae-hyuk looked at the other participants. There was obviously a wolf in sheepskin among them.

“Tiwai has planted spies in here, famously known as wolves, and I know who the spy is.”

“.....!”

Eun-jeong's eyes widened.

She couldn't understand why he was saying this. Yoon Jong-hyun then opened his mouth.

“Is there really a spy?”

“Yes. And if the wolf doesn't confess right now... I won't tell the correct answer to the wolf. Then we can handle it simply.”

“Ah. Then it doesn't matter if we aren't a wolf.”

“Indeed. Of course, if you are one of them then please raise your hand quietly.”

Tae-hyuk looked at them with an expression like he knew everything. Of course, the wolf didn't reveal their identity.

“What, no one came out? Then I will tell the wolf this. Surely you don't think that I didn't notice such suspicious behaviour?”

“.....!”

“Then I will proceed immediately. Ah, right. I have something to say to Eun-jeong noona. Take a look at this once you are sitting down.”

Tae-hyuk handed Eun-jeong a small folded note.

“Y-Yes...”

An Eun-jeong nodded quietly.

The second person entered the Puzzle House. The bearded man greeted her with an interested look. It was the first time a female participant had entered this place.

“Are you going to participate?”

“Yes.”

An Eun-jeong looked at the note Tae-hyuk gave her with an uneasy expression. What did it say?

In a flash, five of her fingers were placed in the guillotine. Even if Tae-hyuk told her all of the correct answers, it was natural to feel nervous. Eun-jeong felt cold sweat drip down her back. Before solving the puzzle, she had to check the note Cheol-su gave her..

“I will read this first.”

“Do as you like.”

“Yes.”

Right now, Eun-jeong couldn't move. The only thing she could do was move her left hand to manipulate the panel. Eun-jeong unfolded the note from Tae-hyuk and started to slowly read it.

This was what was written:

–Noona betrayed those who trusted Noona. Noona should know the pain that they experienced. In fact, I’m not sure who the wolf is yet. However, I should give confidence to the others, so I am going to make Noona a wolf. Everyone can live by sacrificing one person. Then I wish you luck.

"Ahhh!"

Eun-jeong was furious.

Betrayal. Tae-hyuk's betrayal.

Now she would die here. Her limbs would be cut off in a gruesome manner.

Eun-jeong shook her body to get out of the chair. However, she was already stuck. She couldn't get away.

The first problem flashed on the screen.

## Chapter 56 – Black Sheep Exodus #3

---

“Oh my god... A plan to lead all the participants and escape is unprecedented. Have we ever had such a participant? If this happens then it really will be like the miracle of Moses!”

“How many participants are remaining now?”

“17 except for the wolves...”

“I-If the plan is successful then that’s a huge sum of 3.4 billion won!”

The party guests had already heard of the Black Sheep Exodus plan.

Sheep hunting wolves.

That was surprising enough. However, that wasn’t the end. The black sheep started leading other sheep to escape the circus.

Most of the guests listening to the plan thought it was a carefully planned fraud. He and a handful of other people were deceiving the participants in order to survive. If successful, it would be the best scam since the Death Circus started.

That alone made the masked people watch the monitor while sweating. It was the charm of an addictive show.

“This show alone is worth a few billion. Immediately scout Lee Cheol-su as a wolf!”

There were comments about wanting Cheol-su to appear as a wolf in the next Death Circus. Every time Cheol-su solved a puzzle, there would be a loud sigh.

“H-Hoo! H-He perfectly cleared the Puzzle House!”

“T-That is ridiculous! How can he solve it so quickly?”

“I-I already missed nine questions...!”

The extraordinary scenes continued. The black sheep solved all of the problems and received the prize money with a casual expression.

–How is it? Simple right?

Tremendous cheering shook the ballroom. The atmosphere was like the Korean national soccer team scoring a goal from behind!

The only one who remained silent was the lion mask. He was quietly waiting for his sources to figure out Lee Cheol-su’s identity.

A clear photo of his face. His name. The age was in the mid-20s or so.

If they had this information, then all the details could be discovered in 30 minutes. He pressed the call button as the call he had been waiting for arrived.

“It is me. So what did you find out?”

–That... So. No matter where I looked, there was no information matching the person you described.

“W-What? You can’t even find him with that much money! You incompetent bastard!”

–I-I’m really sorry. I thought his name might be an alias, so I tried searching the resident registration cards of adult males. Indeed...

“Then he would be a ghost!”

–I-I am ashamed of myself.

The lion mask roughly hung up. In the end, he couldn’t identify the black sheep. The lion mask looked at the image of Seo Tae-hyuk on the monitor. He murmured in a trembling voice.

“You... Who the hell are you?”

Then he shut up again.

There was another person on the monitor. It was the woman called An Eun-jeong who had been attached to the black sheep from the beginning of the Death Circus.

She read the note from the black sheep and suddenly screamed. Unfortunately, they couldn't see the contents because of the camera angles.

The masked people clamoured loudly.

“What is that?”

“I'm feeling dizzy. Please show the note.”

“Damn. Call the Puzzle House manager right now to check it out!”

Unexpected developments followed.

The lion mask swallowed his saliva and stared at the monitor. He was curious about the following contents so he couldn't afford to think of anything else.

---

Tears flowed from An Eun-jeong's eyes. Her heart throbbed, and it felt like her heart had been cut into twelve pieces.



At that moment, she recalled a sentence that Cheol-su wrote.

‘Noona should know the pain that they experienced.’

“Ah...”

A moan emerged from An Eun-jeong’s mouth.

She betrayed her family and ran away before falling into the corruption of a multilevel company.

Father... And her little sister... Did they feel like this? It was the feeling of being betrayed by someone that was completely trusted.

“I’m sorry. Daddy... I’m sorry... Sorry Eun-young... Mama... I can’t return...”

She would soon die. The guillotine would cut off her limbs and she would die an awful death.

At that time, the appearance of her family emerged. The appearance that she had hated so much came to Eun-jeong’s mind. If only she was given one more chance... She wanted to apologize to them for her mistakes.

“Sob sob...”

Eun-jeong slowly started to prepare her mind for death.

At that moment, the bearded manager of the Puzzle House approached Eun-jeong and said,

“Did you have a fight with your lover? By the way... The man who just left told me to say something to you.”

“U-Uwaah...”

“I don’t know what the situation is, so I will just say it.”

He threw some words at her before returning to his seat.

“That note is a joke.”

“...Sob... Huh?”

She was so amazed that the flowing tears dried in an instant.

“What’s up with that look? I received money so I just did what I was told.”

The bearded man started to count the money that he had received from someone.

“D-Don’t tell me...”

Eun-jeong wiped her eyes with her sleeves and looked out of the Puzzle House. She saw Cheol-su smiling innocently at her. He waved his hand when he caught her eyes.

In the end, Eun-jeong couldn’t resist screaming.

“Hey, you jerk!”

She wanted to do something truly unpleasant right now but she couldn’t.

---

“H-How can t-t-this person d-do this!”

An Eun-jeong was able to solve all the puzzles and earned 50 million won.

As soon as she came out, she demanded answers from Tae-hyuk who was waiting. Tae-hyuk replied with a satisfied expression.

“Wasn’t it a moderately tense attraction? Now, don’t betray the faith of your family again.”

An Eun-jeong bit her lip. It was terrible enough to make her want to beat him up. But thanks to him, she was alive like this. In the

end, Eun-jeong agreed.

“Yes...”

“If you betray them once more then you will see me again.”

“H-Hik!”

An Eun-jeong’s face turned white. Meet this demon again? She didn’t want to imagine such a terrible thing.

“Come now. There is no time. The next person should enter. I will tell them the answers.”

Although there was some trouble, An Eun-jeong answered all of the puzzles and earned the prize money safely due to Tae-hyuk telling her the answers from outside. The participants who saw it raised their hands.

“I’ll do it.”

“No, me first!”

Tae-hyuk put them in a suitable order and smiled as he nodded.

‘Like this, hasn’t Eun-jeong noona’s spirit become determined?’

She obviously wouldn't enter a pyramid scheme again. The plan to mentally fix An Eun-young and Seo Ha-ran ended safely. Now the only thing left was to thoroughly defeat the Death Circus.

‘But I never thought it would be helpful to memorize all these problems.’

There were a total of 150 problems in the Puzzle House. And the questions were random. In order to find all the problems, a person would have to participate at least five times. In the worst case, they might challenge the Puzzle House 21 times. It was impossible for all the participants to challenge the Puzzle House to figure out the questions.

But it was possible for Tae-hyuk who had memories of the future.

He was trapped in a prison cell for 10 years. They weren't pleasant memories. However, Tae-hyuk had knowledge of many crimes thanks to that experience.

Nights in the prison were long. The prisoners who didn't fall asleep easily would quiz each other. The problems at that time were the ones written by the Producer. Tae-hyuk heard prisoners solving the problems every night.

He became really tired of hearing it. It was to the extent that he knew the answer just by hearing the first word of the question.

Due to that, this ridiculous winning strategy was possible. Tae-

hyuk laughed and muttered.

“Now it is time to catch a wolf.”

---

“W-We really can get out of here alive!”

“It is all thanks to Boss!”

An additional 10 people cleared the Puzzle House for a total of 500 million won. The time remaining was approximately 150 minutes. They would be able to collect the target amount before closing.

‘Of course, I don’t have to do anything.’

The wolf laughed.

Their job was simple: Interfere in the work of the black sheep. Then they could get out of here. They could obtain the bounty.

The wolf’s plan was simple. The total amount of money that the group of sheep had was 900 million, with most of the money belonging to the black sheep. Furthermore, the next three payment fees meant that more than half of that money would be gone.

In the end, the number of people who could get out would be

reduced to two. In other words, if they didn't make money anymore then the sheep would fight against each other.

‘The method is really simple. There can only be one person in the Puzzle House. That is the rule. Once inside, I won't answer the questions for as long as possible so they won't be able to proceed. In other words, I will waste all the time.’

It was a simply way to destroy the sheep.

The wolf smiled. It was their turn to enter the Puzzle House.

‘You didn't notice my identity even at the end. Yes. This is my victory!’

The wolf slowly walked towards the puzzle house.

---

“Wait a minute.”

“Huh?”

Tae-hyuk blocked the person about to enter the Puzzle House.

“I think we should change the order of entry. You can enter after everybody has already obtained 200 million won.”

“W-Why all of a sudden? Didn’t you set the order beforehand?”

“That’s right.”

Tae-hyuk slowly took a step forward and whispered in the other person’s ear.

“Because you are a wolf.”

“W-What are you talking about? I’m not a wolf. You should know. The people gathered in Group A absolutely can’t be wolves!”

The only woman belonging to Group A, Jeon Mina, shouted with confusion.

“If you aren’t a wolf, then it doesn’t really matter. The order is just changed. There will only be a little bit of boredom from waiting. In the meantime, you can talk to Eun-jeong noona.”

“I-I’m innocent! I believed in Boss from the beginning! Ah, yes. Kim Jun-tae! He is the wolf. It is obvious no matter how you look at it. If Boss asks for everyone’s opinion...”

Tae-hyuk ignored Mina and called Yoon Jong-hyun over.

“Ajusshi. Could you capture this person?”



“I-Is Mina really the wolf?”

“You will know by the end.”

“Yes. I understand.”

Yoon Jong-hyun picked up the rope and started to bind Mina’s body. Mina shrieked.

“Ah! It hurts! A little softer! So unfair! I’m really not the wolf!”

Mina was on the verge of tears.

A few participants who saw her were swayed.

“I don’t think she is...”

“Why is Boss being like this?”

“We have to believe in Boss. Let’s watch.”

Tae-hyuk was immovable as he laughed at Mina.

“Mina. No, Wolf. The plan for wasting time in the Puzzle House is now useless. It is your defeat.”

Mina glared at Tae-hyuk. Then all of a sudden, she started laughing.

“Ahhahahaha! ...How did you know? My acting was perfect.”

Mina's atmosphere instantly changed, making her seem like a different person. The participants watching got goose bumps.

Tae-hyuk raised two fingers.

“You made two mistakes.”

“Mistakes?”

“It is simple. The other participants are looking for some way to live. But the wolf will try to kill others. I clearly remember that you were trying to kill Kim Jun-tae.”

“Kuoock...”

Mina gave a strange groan.

“And in a situation like this, it's normal to doubt the other person. A person who blindly believes in me is rather suspicious. Kid. Practice acting some more.”

Tae-hyuk stroked Mina's head like she was a cute baby.

“Now. Come. The interference has disappeared.”

The fourth wolf, Mina, was captured. The last of the remaining wolves, the fifth one had disappeared.

There were no longer any wolves in this group. Tae-hyuk nodded slightly at everyone gathered.

“Then we will take the money and smash the Death Circus.”

The Black Sheep Exodus plan had reached its final phase.

## Chapter 57 – Black Sheep Exodus #4

---

Tae-hyuk checked the badges of the participants with a serious expression. Most of them had the number 200 or more on the display.

‘A total of 3.67 billion won...!’

He was able to collect the target amount 40 minutes earlier than expected. Originally, he was supposed to search for the fifth wolf and reunite with the gambling brothers.

However, they were hiding. Maybe Kim Joon-young had issued some instructions. As a result, he could save more than 30 minutes.

There was now a cheerful atmosphere around the group as Yoon Jong-hyun walked out.

“Boss. What will you do with the wolf?”

It was an expression that indicated he would do anything that was ordered.

“Oof! Oof!”

Mina’s face turned white. Her life now depended on Tae-hyuk’s words, and she couldn’t even defend herself because she was

gagged.

“I said that I would take everyone out of here.”

“Ah, even a traitor?”

Tae-hyuk immediately answered like it was a no-brainer.

“Of course.”

“...Yes. I understand.”

“I want to talk to her for a bit before that.”

The other gathered people disappeared and Tae-hyuk approached Mina with a satisfied expression.

“Are you surprised that you’re still alive?”

“Oof!”

“I want to hear some information from Mina noona. Do you know anything about the fifth wolf?”

Mina’s face changed from white to purple.

“I’m asking you to tell me right away. I’m a little bit interested in who he is.”

Tae-hyuk had smelled a familiar scent while walking around Death Circus. He checked the Demon Revealing Mirror and all of his stats were decreasing. Fortunately, his concentration didn’t decline as fast as before.

Anyways, there was definitely a criminal who used psychedelic fragrances in the Death Circus. They were clearly a wolf, and not a regular participant. Then another wolf, Mina, was more likely to know his identity.

Tae-hyuk pulled a syringe containing clear liquid from his pocket and stabbed it in Mina’s arm.

“I’m not a professional at this, so please understand.”

“Oof..!”

Mina fiercely struggled but her body was tied up and resistance was impossible.

“Are you curious about what this is?”

Tae-hyuk tossed the syringe and said. Mina looked at him with shaking eyes. There was a black and red butterfly stain at the place where he injected her.

“.....!”

“Ah, don’t worry. The stain will disappear in a moment.”

Tae-hyuk started to explain with an emotionless face.

“However, if you don’t receive the antidote within a week, then blood will pour out from every hole in your body and you will die... Ah, it is unfortunate that I won’t be able to see it directly.”

Tae-hyuk shook his head with a grim expression. He truly felt sorry.

“U...! Ooof!”

‘Poison?’

Did you inject poison just now?’

An ominous energy was coming from the black butterfly on Mina’s arm. In addition, blood pouring from every hole in her body...This was the first time she heard of this poison.

“Well, think of it as an offering.”

“Oooooof!”

Tae-hyuk turned around and walked to the place where everyone else was gathered.

Mina realized that the moment she left this place, she had to mobilize all of her power to find that man. If she didn't, then she would die.

---

‘Wow. Isn’t this really usable?’

Tae-hyuk looked at the screen of the Demon Revealing Mirror. It stated the remaining number of times he could use the Counterfeit skill.

[Counterfeit skill 1/3]

‘In the end, it is three times a day?’

Counterfeit had the ability to make tangible things look different. It was particularly useful because it didn't need materials to be used. Instead, he could only use it three times a day.

Tae-hyuk recalled Mina's expression. She looked at him like she was seeing a monster.



‘Aigoo. Today is the day when I am hated by females.’

Tae-hyuk received information about the fifth wolf. In order to do that, it was necessary to trick Jeon Mina.

‘Well, that was just water so don’t blame me.’

Tae-hyuk shrugged.

The Bluff Poker table had a bunch of syringes to draw blood. He had taken one, filled it up with water, and injected it in Mina. Then he triggered the Counterfeit skill. It made her feel like the drug had turned her skin black. Moreover, the duration of the Counterfeit skill was five minutes, so it would return to its original state.

Tae-hyuk took full advantage of this to deceive Mina. Thinking about it again, his acting was really plausible. Now she would try everything she could to meet him in a week.

“Then it is time for the Producer to call.”

All of the participants had the 200 million won needed to clear the circus. It was something that Kim Joon-young would need to react to. The participants, who didn’t know what Tae-hyuk was plotting, were talking among themselves.

“Then we’ll become platinum members of the company now?”

“Of course! We cleared the Death Circus!”

“Ohhhh!”

They were purely delighted.

Tae-hyuk licked his lips.

The guests were still here, so there couldn’t be any nonsense. Anyway, they had achieved the goal in accordance to the rules of the Death Circus. But would 17 people really get the platinum membership card?

That Choi Sung-yeol?

At that time, an announcement was heard inside the Death Circus.

– Bravo! Congratulations on clearing the Death Circus! All of you will receive Tiwai International’s platinum membership certificate. Then please follow the guide outside. There will also be an award ceremony for Lee Cheol-su as the representative of the participants.

After the announcement ended, all of the participants threw their badges into the sky and cheered.

Only An Eun-jeong and Yoon Jong-hyun were watching Tae-hyuk.

A platinum member of Tiwai. It meant becoming part of those who tried to kill them. In addition, there were currently 15 platinum members in Tiwai. If they upgraded all 17 people, then it would double in an instant. If a person thought calmly, they would absolutely never receive the compensation. No, they might not even survive this place.

Tae-hyuk just spoke with a relaxed smile.

“They called. Don’t you have to go?”

In no time, dozens of men in black suits were surrounding the participants. Their waists were bulging, as if they were wearing something underneath.

“Then follow me.”

A black suited man gestured to Tae-hyuk. The other participants stepped closer to Tae-hyuk with uneasy eyes. If they followed him then they could at least live. However, the men in black suits stopped the participants from walking forward.

“The other people, please wait here. We will bring Lee Cheol-su first.”

Tae-hyuk looked back at the participants and followed the black suited man in silence. Producer Kim Joon-young would obviously be waiting for him.

The remaining An Eun-jeong muttered something.

“The exodus hasn’t ended yet? What...”

---

“Oh my god, I never thought you would really clear the Death Circus. You showed me many great things today.”

Kim Joon-young headed towards Tae-hyuk with a welcoming pose. The place that Tae-hyuk was guided to was the Producer’s office, furnished with a big monitor and luxurious furniture. He would watch the Death Circus using this monitor.

Kim Joon-young touched a chair and indicated for him to sit down.

“Then let’s get into the specifics.”

Tae-hyuk sat down in the chair and Kim Joon-young opened his arms.

“Congratulations. With this, you have become a member of Tiwai International.”

Tae-hyuk replied with an impatient look,

“I’m not one of the players. Aren’t you tired? Won’t you cut to the chase?”

Kim Joon-young looked at Cheol-su with an expression of interest.

“Haha. Indeed, I know it all. Personally, I think that you are a mysterious expert brought by one of the guests.”

“It is something similar.”

“Indeed! Then I will be blunt. I would like to scout you. I will try to match your conditions as much as possible. If you become the head of the wolves, then I’m sure the Death Circus will become the best show in history.”

He thought that Tae-hyuk’s actions in the Death Circus were to show off his skills.

“So how much money can you give me?”

“Haha. Please wait a moment.”

Kim Joon-young took out a tablet PC and showed a neatly organized table. It was a contract stating the terms and conditions.

Scamming and ruining one person was worth 20 million won, while a frontal match was 30 million won. And if he created a show like this one, then he would get 200 million in incentives.

Tae-hyuk pushed away the contract and said.

“I will only appear twice. Additionally, if I kill more than 10 people then the payout is doubled.”

Kim Joon-young’s fingers trembled.

“Cough. Double?”

“Yes.”

Kim Joon-young briefly thought about it, but he realized the value of the man in front of him.

“I understand. Then let’s sign a formal contract.”

Tae-hyuk raised his hand as Kim Joon-young was about to hand him the contract.

“Wait. Before that, I want to say hello to the audience as the main character of the Death Circus. If I’m lucky, then can’t I get tips?”

Kim Joon-young nodded.

“I wanted to ask you that. Everyone wants to meet you.”

“This... Today I made a lot of money. That reminds me, what about the other participants? Surely you won’t give all of them a platinum membership card.”

Kim Joon-young’s eyes shone. He asked, so naturally the answer was obvious.

“Of course, 20 drums will be dumped off the coast tomorrow.”

“Haha, indeed! You truly are a bad person.”

“Thank you for the compliment. Then let’s go greet the guests.”

Kim Joon-young completely believed in Tae-hyuk.

His gait, his gestures, his expression, and especially, his tone. Everything about Tae-hyuk showed that he was the best criminal around.

However, it was all just acting. Tae-hyuk followed behind Kim Joon-young and confirmed the message from Moonlight Flower.

–Everything is ready.

Tae-hyuk smiled widely.

---

There was an uproar as Tae-hyuk entered the ballroom. It felt like he had become a Hollywood star.

“Ohh! You are the main character of the Death Circus right now!”

“Great skills!”

“Yes! Truly a wolf candidate.”

“Wah. I am already looking forward to your next stage!”

Tae-hyuk entered and greeted them. Applause rang out here and there.

“Hello. I am Lee Cheol-su.”

People gathered around him. They were holding something in their hands.

“Today’s performance was so good. This is a tip.”



It was a 10 million won check.

“This is a platinum card. You can use up to 100 million freely. Have this glass of wine as well.”

In an instant, Tae-hyuk’s hands became heavy with gifts.

“Thank you. By the way, I have something I personally want to say to you.”

He caught the attention of the masked people. Were the tips too burdensome?

As Tae-hyuk gestured, the woman in the butterfly mask came out from among the masked people with a bunch of documents.

“Noona. Thank you. I will definitely pay this back.”

“Bah. You didn’t keep your promise from before. Still, it was fun.”

As the two people conversed, the lion mask and opera mask came forward.

The lion mask said.

“...As expected, you know this person!”

The opera mask said.

“That’s right...”

Tae-hyuk took the bundle of documents and skimmed through it.

Then he said,

“Wah. The one wearing the lion mask. Aren’t you Sung Won-jin, the chairman of the Taesung Group? You have a hobby like this. Ah, then the opera mask, you are the daughter of the president of Taesung Group? I thought you were married. An affair like this...”

Tae-hyuk started to slowly reveal the identity of the masked people. The inside of the room became frenzied.

“W-What is this? Fuck, block his mouth right now!”

“Aaaaack!”

“What is this bastard doing?”

Tae-hyuk smiled and raised a hand as if to block the masked people rushing towards him.

“Stop moving! If you don’t want to die then stay still.”

“Crazy bastard. Are you pranking us right now? President Kim. Send that bastard out right now!”

“Yes!”

Kim Joon-young was furious.

He had been feeling good about finding a worthy wolf after a long time. The Death Circus would flourish with him as a wolf, but now everything was messed up.

Lee Cheol-su was revealing the identity of the guests. Now they wouldn't come to see his show again. Kim Joon-young thought about how he could painfully kill Cheol-su and called out to the suited men waiting outside.

The men armed with guns approached.

“What? Stay still if we don't want to die? Let's talk after there are a few more holes in your body. Shoot him!”

Then Tae-hyuk took off his coat. Dozens of primed explosives, dynamite, could be seen around his body.

“Huh? Didn't I say to stop moving?”

“Aaaack!” It's a bomb!”

Everyone in the room screamed.

## Chapter 58 – Black Sheep Exodus #5

---

“P-President Kim! What are you doing? The contract wasn’t finished?”

“L-Lee Cheol-su...!”

The guests were completely overwhelmed by Tae-hyuk. They had only watched the slaughter on the monitors from a safe place. However, now the danger had neared them.

It was like going to the cinema to watch a horror movie and having a ghost popping out of the screen. It was a crisis that they had never anticipated. The guests fell to the ground to avoid the explosion. No one had the courage to stop Tae-hyuk directly.

Kim Joon-young kept his composure and asked,

“...Is that real dynamite?”

Tae-hyuk licked his lips and detached a stick of dynamite from his body and held it up in the air for everyone to see.

“Why? Do you want to experience it directly with your body? Ah, I see that there is no fire. Does anyone here smoke?”

“Hiiik!”

The guests on the ground shook their heads desperately.

“In anybody wants to experiment then tell me. I’ll let you feel it with your body. Oh, please don’t move carelessly. My coworker has installed the same thing all over the building.”

“Me, me! I did it!”

The butterfly mask raised her hand as if to appeal to the audience.

“Keok! Already...”

Kim Joon-young moaned.

Tae-hyuk smiled as he looked at the dynamite around his body. It was a fake bomb made using the Forgery skill. Crude chemicals were combined to create something with 1/20th of the original explosive power. The only person who would die was the person holding it. If there was an explosion here, then Tae-hyuk would be the only one killed.

He increased the realism of the fakes through the Counterfeit skill. Fake dynamite was created by combining Forgery and Counterfeit.

How many people here could do this? There was no one. No matter how coarsely a fake explosive was crafted, it would still explode if set on fire. Tae-hyuk had participated in the Death

Circus all night while keeping it on his body. His mental state absolutely wasn't normal.

‘Well, there is no detonator, so the wick needs to be set on fire directly. That is safe enough.’

Break the Death Circus.

In order to do that, it wasn't enough to get rid of Kim Joon-young. If he didn't destroy the guests, who were the consumers, then a second and third Death Circus would appear.

That's why he asked Moonlight Flower to steal their information. When he asked if it was possible, Moonlight Flower nodded with a casual expression.

It was an absolute secret that must never be leaked. It was protected by digital security from a professional company with several layers of passwords which unfortunately belonged to her family.

‘Moonlight Flower... No, Yoo Ha-yang. The 3rd generation daughter of a huge security company...’

Once coincidences were repeated, it become inevitability. In the end, Choi Sung-yeol and Kim Joon-young themselves leaked all of the information to the security company that they believed would protect them.

‘Well. No one would’ve thought about Ha-yang noona.’

Tae-hyuk looked at Yoo Ha-yang, who was smiling thoughtlessly.

‘I need to pay off this debt.’

Tae-hyuk bowed to Ha-yang who played a key role in destroying the Death Circus. Moonlight Flower just laughed with a strange expression.

Tae-hyuk confirmed the number of people in the room. There were approximately 15 masked people. Kim Joon-young had five bodyguards in black suits. There were also seven black suits in the Death Circus. If he added Kim Joon-young and Choi Sung-yeol in the count, then it was exactly 29 people.

“Didn’t you sign the contract? You said that you would participate in the next Death Circus as a wolf.”

“Betrayer!”

“Ah. What bad manners. I intend to follow the contract. But unfortunately, I am a busy person. Therefore, I would like to proceed with the next Death Circus today.”

Tae-hyuk smiled happily.

“Aren’t all the new participants gathered here?”



The guests who realized what he meant screamed.

“Well. Isn’t it enjoyable to be the protagonists of a stage at least once? Ah right. Of course, I’ll participate. The contract states that I’ll get 10 million won for killing one person. Furthermore, if I kill more than 10 people, then there will be an incentive. So how much money can I make this time?”

Chairman Sung Won-jin was lying on the ground and he grit his teeth together in anger. What? They would participate in the Death Circus from now on? If he had a chance then the first thing he would do was to kill Lee Cheol-su. If he worked with all the guests gathered here...

“Oh, that lion mask over there. You seem to be plotting something. Is it really possible? Don’t I have this?”

Tae-hyuk tapped the dynamite on his body.

Sung Won-jin screamed. He had forgotten for a while but Lee Cheol-su had the dynamite. It would be impossible to harm him, even if they attacked as a group. If so, in a 1:1 match...

Wait, they had to fight that monster? No! They absolutely couldn’t win! Before, they had been enjoying his actions through the monitor, but now they had to go against him in reality.

Sung Won-jin’s face distorted with despair. Then he shook his

head. It was his complete defeat.

“Aaaack!”

The guests who realized that they would have to fight a monster fainted.

“Then let’s start the second one.”

Until the closing of the new Death Circus –

480 minutes.

---

“Ugh... Tired.”

Tae-hyuk stretched as he watched the sun rise and asked An Eun-jeong, who was quietly standing beside him,

“Are you sorry that they won’t be killed?”

Unfortunately, it hadn’t been possible to open a new stage with the guests who came to watch the Death Circus. It was due to the police who received a report and arrived on the scene.

Seo Tae-hyuk and An Eun-jeong were able to escape the building

safely with the help of Moonlight Flower. That woman truly ran very fast. Moonlight Flower had reminded Tae-hyuk that he made a promise to go to the amusement park with her. Then she waved her hand and disappeared.

An Eun-jeong bit her lip until it was bloody and said.

“...No. I am just lucky to have survived. Then what will happen to them now?”

“They will be judged by the law. I left a lot of evidence behind.”

“I see. Then running away like this...”

Tae-hyuk had removed all evidence that An Eun-jeong had worked for Tiwai. The fact that she was involved in this incident would disappear from the world.

Tae-hyuk laughed and replied.

“You should thank the fact that you have a good sister.”

“Yes...”

“Never let tears flow from the eyes of your family because of your actions again. Otherwise I will punish you.”

Tae-hyuk turned and started heading somewhere. An Eun-jeong smiled at his retreating form and shouted.

“Thank you so much! Saving my life and my family... Ah! This man! Listen until the end!”

An Eun-jeong sighed and returned home. The things she experienced that night felt like a dream.

Exactly one week passed by.

She had a proper job, not an illegal one like the multilevel scheme. It was a cashier job to calculate the goods that the customers purchased. It was a hard job where she had to stand for eight hours a day, but it felt like heaven compared to life in the Death Circus.

At night, she went to a cram school to prepare for her entrance exams. She wanted to go to university.

If she worked hard every day without doing illegal work, would she someday be recognized by her parents?

Yes. She would go and greet her parents on New Year's Day. An Eun-jeong laughed at the thought.

---

“Clothes OK. Gift OK.”

An Eun-jeong turned around in the mirror. It was the first time she wore a suit since working at Tiwai. That salary was twice what she was receiving now, but she felt like she had been doing something wrong. And in the end, she had to participate in the Death Circus.

What would have happened if she hadn't met Lee Cheol-su?

“What is he doing now?”

In the end, she didn't know anything about Lee Cheol-su. He had tremendous skills. Was he using it to capture other criminals? It was apparent that he was doing a big job.

A strange confidence rose now that she was wearing her best clothes.

“Yes! Eun-jeong fighting!”

An Eun-jeong gave a small shout and headed out. She was returning home, where her family was gathered, for the first time in ages. It was only her sister and father but she felt full of something.

“I-Is it really U-Unni? Unni!”

Her tearful sister threw open the door. Eun-jeong embraced her

sister and stroked her hair.

“Ah, I can finally see my little sister...”

She had cried when she thought that she would go to hell without seeing her family. Eun-jeong remembered the face of that man and laughed.

In the end, she was able to meet her family again. He was like a hero of justice who beat the villains and then disappeared.

“I am entering. Is Father home?”

“Yes. But... I have a friend over. I called him to eat because he said he would be alone on New Years...”

Eun-young mumbled with a strange expression.

“Yes. My little sister. Is he your boyfriend?”

At that moment, Eun-young’s face turned red. Eun-jeong gently patted her sister on the head. She was already big enough to bring a boyfriend home.

“Ah, no! He is just a friend that I study with!”

“Ahaha. I see. I understand. I will trust you.”

At that time, the voice of man was heard.

“Eun-jeong came? It’s been a while. It is cold. Come in quickly.”

She was back after running away from home a few years ago, but her family acted like it was natural for her to come here. Eun-jeong’s eyes turned red. From now on, she would make sure to act like a daughter to her father. She vowed to do so.

Eun-jeong walked towards the room where her father was waiting.

“Eh? A guest?”

Her father and Eun-young’s friend were playing chess.

“Ah. Eun-young’s friend. This guy. You are very wily. It is a lot of fun playing chess with you.”

Her father chuckled with a smile on his face. Her father was being overwhelmed as he said those words. It was over. The opponent obviously had the skills of a semi-pro. Well, perhaps... He did it on purpose.

Eun-jeong looked at her sister’s boyfriend. There... He rose slowly and bowed his head.

“Hello. Nice to meet you. I am Seo Tae-hyuk who is studying with Class President.”

Unlike what Eun-jeong knew, his face and gestures were calm. But he obviously...!

Tae-hyuk smiled and raised an index finger to his mouth and quietly said,

“It is a secret. Noona.”

Cheol-su...! Eun-jeong couldn't understand why that fearsome monster was in her house. Ah, yes. He said that he came because of her little sister. Eun-jeong sat down with a frightened face and started to cry.

“I-I'm really sorry...! I was wrong... Please forgive me...!”

The confused father of the two sisters said,

“...E-Eun-jeong. Father has already forgiven you, so you don't need to apologize. Yes? Don't do this in front of a guest. Isn't our Eun-jeong good?”

“No, that's not it...”

In the end, Eun-jeong was forgiven by her father.



It was a happy ending on the first day of the new year.

# Chapter 59 – It Seems Like Something Is Going On #1

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Tae-hyuk finished his shower and looked in the mirror. He could see a half-naked man with a rotten smile.

“Eh? Did I look that bad?”

In fact, he didn't have a good impression of his looks in the past. However, now he felt like he went beyond the 'not bad' level.

“It feels like more characteristics have arrived. Surely it isn't a side effect of the crime skill...?”

As he gained more crime skills, Seo Tae-hyuk became aware of his stats. It was directly reflected on his body. As intelligence rose, his brain became better, while as agility went up, he could move faster. Perhaps the crime skills affected his appearance as well.

“Aish, it can't be.”

Tae-hyuk smiled as refreshingly as possible, forcing out the freshness. The mirror showed a miraculous reflection of how much effort he put in.

“Hmm hmm. Handsome.”

It seemed like he looked the most wonderful after having a

shower. Tae-hyuk looked at himself with satisfied eyes.

He himself was aware that his personality had changed considerably from the past.

He was doing this because he was now going to meet Yoo Ha-yang. They were going out to play, but it was technically a date. He had to maintain the basic courtesies.

“Well. Noona helped me out this time.”

Tae-hyuk smashed the Death Circus exactly 70 hours ago. In addition to that, he got two blacklist members and a huge 20 affinity points.

[Current affinity points in possession: 20]

Just seeing it caused a smile to appear on his face.

He gained points if he managed to establish a relationship with a person he didn't know in his past life, or if he saved someone who should've died. It was the first time he got 20 points at once. It meant that Kim Joon-young and Choi Sung-yeol killed a lot of people in the future.

As they were caught, the atrocities of the Death Circus became known throughout the country. The shocking thing was that

dozens of chaebols were involved in the case.

Like hyenas finding rotten meat, the media started biting at them. Wouldn't it be a case that shakes the country for a whole month?

After finishing his shower, Tae-hyuk wore his now trademark leather jacket and skinny jeans. They weren't clothes suitable for a date with a woman.

Tae-hyuk smiled with satisfaction and left his house.

---

The plan was simple. First, they would eat likely before stopping at a marine theme park for a few hours.

The two people were eating at a restaurant that Tae-hyuk had previously reserved. However, Ha-yang's expression was strange. It was the first time he had seen her look like this.

Tae-hyuk spoke as he ate spicy pork stir-fry.

“Uh, Noona. You don't like spicy pork stir-fry? Then you can buy something else. There are many things on the menu here. I am paying, so you can eat at will.”

Then she shook her head with a flustered expression.

“Ah, no. It’s the first time I’ve been here. Wah... You can have the side dishes. Let’s go to the amusement park after eating.”

The place where the two people were eating was a branch store selling kimbap for 1,500 won. There were dozens of dishes sold at low prices, so it was Tae-hyuk’s main restaurant.

Come to think of it, Yoo Ha-yang was a chaebol. She wasn’t well-matched with common places like this. Tae-hyuk felt sorry at that moment.

Ha-yang had been a big help in solving the Death Circus case. In particular, he was able to secure information about the guests with her ability. Wouldn’t it be better to reward her with a more luxurious restaurant?

‘But I don’t have the money.’

He could barely afford the theme park admission fee.

Tae-hyuk earned over 100 million not long ago at the casino. However, rumours of a subway being built near his house were circulating and the price of the house had increased by 60%. There were also the living expenses and school expenses for his brother and sister. In the end, he didn’t make any money.

This was why he had to catch one or two more people like Yoo Cheol-ho. Furthermore, he didn’t earn one cent from the Death

Circus. Rather, he had to spend money for Moonlight Flower to enter the masquerade party. It was literally a deficit.

‘Ohh. This is really dangerous. First, I need to get some money.’

It was possible if he used the Gambling and Forgery skills in the right way. If so, what should he choose? It needed to be a low-risk and high-return method. He needed to seriously consider this.

---

The two people ended their meal and went to the newly opened marine theme park. It was an amusement park that was a combination of an aquarium and an amusement park.

“Wah! I wanted to come here!”

Ha-yang enjoyed the trip like a middle school student on a field trip.

“Then what do you want to see?”

“Dolphins!”

At the moment, Tae-hyuk remembered that the hippo incident had taken place at an aquarium. It was a completely different place from here, but he couldn't help but think about it when he saw the water tanks filled with water.

‘Eeit! I’ve been hanging around criminals too much. I just want to relax today. What could possibly happen?’

Tae-hyuk thought and nodded.

Then why?

He had an ominous feeling that something was going to happen. At that time, Tae-hyuk heard the conversation of a couple passing by.

“Did you see today’s news? A huge number of chaebols were arrested for watching a slaughter show.”

“Oh, I did! At first I thought I was watching the ad for a new movie!”

“Then did you know that there was a man who saved those who were captured? They were all people who would’ve died, but he used his great abilities to lead them to escape.”

“Wow, great! So what happened to him? Did he receive any commendation?”

“No. The person who saved them suddenly disappeared.”

“Wah! How perfect! What is his identity? An FBI agent?”

The couple didn't know that the person they were talking about was right next to them. Ha-yang heard their conversation and paused,

“Ah, over here! He is actually he... Oof!”

Tae-hyuk blocked Ha-yang's mouth.

“N-Noona. You shouldn't say that!”

“...Ah. Indeed. Sorry. But Tae-hyuk saved everyone. The fact that no one knows this...”

Tae-hyuk answered with a small sigh.

“Noona knows. Isn't that good enough?”

Then Ha-yang smiled widely.

“Ah, yes!”

Tae-hyuk used all types of illegal activities to catch criminals, so if he got caught by the police then he would be handcuffed, not rewarded. He would also repeat the same thing until he was promoted to the Noble rank. He had 12 people left to catch on his blacklist before he could be promoted to Noble.



Before that, he absolutely couldn't go out into the spotlight. There was a need to be as careful as possible.

‘I shouldn't expose my face now.’

It wasn't uncomfortable. He would take advantage of it to make a profit.

Tae-hyuk licked his lips and looked at the huge water tank in front of him. The escalator they were riding passed the tanks towards the basement. The place where the dolphin show was being held was the fourth underground floor.

The Atlantis Theme Park was a huge dome shaped building, and various rides could be enjoyed on the ground. The building was over 30 metres tall, so it was incredible. The marine park, which extended all the way to the fourth basement floor, was very popular because it gave the feeling of being under the sea.

Tae-hyuk got off the escalator and looked around. There were huge tanks holding thousands of tons of water. It was shaped like a donut, and the audience could see various sea creatures in the hole in the middle.

“Tae-hyuk, look at that! Moray. It looks exactly like you!”

“We're completely different!”

Tae-hyuk's mouth twitched. He looked just like the fish passing by him.

“But what happens if all of this breaks?”

Yoo Ha-yang tapped the water tanks. It was very thick, but she still had a hazy expression on her face.

“Ahaha. There is no need to worry.”

A female guide wearing a uniform approached the worried Ha-yang. Ha-yang replied with shining eyes.

“Huh? Really?”

“Yes. Our Atlantis Aquarium boasts an extraordinary water tank made of a special acrylic that has ultra-fine fibres of 90cm in thickness. It can withstand a water pressure of 500,000 tons, and won't break, even when shot.”

“I-I see! Then I can look around with confidence!”

“It is natural to feel uneasy. But don't worry. As long as a bomb explodes in front of it, the tanks absolutely won't break.”

“This is the middle of the city so there is no need to worry about bombs. Right Tae-hyuk?”

Ha-yang smiled at Tae-hyuk.

“Eh? Seo Tae-hyuk?”

But Tae-hyuk was muttering something with a serious expression.

“Water Theme Park Atlantis. The super large tanks...”

Ha-yang tilted her head to one side.

“What are you doing?”

However, Tae-hyuk still seemed to be thinking of something.

“Cracked, collapsed, submerged... The cause was a bomb explosion!”

Tae-hyuk managed to remember. Atlantis suffered a tremendous accident half a year after it was opened. The water tanks in front of him were destroyed and the entire underground area submerged. Hundreds of people died and it was a huge disaster. It wasn't a mere accident, but a bomb attack.

The culprit...

‘Bomber Kim Tae-sung!’

Tae-hyuk looked at the guide with a serious expression. She would know the exact fact.

“How long has it been since the first opening?”

Obviously, if his memory was correct, a tremendous disaster would occur here. It also wasn't too far in the future. Maybe this was the source of his ominous feeling. The guide kindly gave an explanation of the history of Atlantis.

“Yes. Three years ago, the Water Theme Park Atlantis started...”

Tae-hyuk cut in and stopped a long story.

“So when did you open?”

“Ah, yes! As of today, it is 91 days. Why do you want to know?”

“It is three months. Huu...”

Tae-hyuk sighed with relief.

“Did something happen? That reminds me, you said something about a collapse. What relation...”

Tae-hyuk shrugged. Anyway, it was going to happen three

months later. If he spoke now then he would be called a fraud.

“Oh, nothing. Just a mobile game story.”

“So it is like that! At any rate, what you see in front of you is called the Milky Way of the sea...”

The guide started explaining as she descended the escalator. Other guests were listening to the story as well. But something was wrong. The disaster would happen three months later. He knew the criminal was a blacklist member so he would be able to stop it from happening but that uneasy feeling didn't disappear. It was like he had closed his eyes and was walking towards the edge of a cliff.

This feeling became clearer every second. It was at that moment.

Biiiiik!

Unlike usual, the Demon Revealing Mirror started vibrating violently. It seemed to be a warning. Tae-hyuk projected the screen of the Demon Revealing Mirror in front of him.

[Caution!]

-The Spying skill has detected a danger.

-The special ability has been triggered and 20 affinity points have been reduced.

-Amount of time remaining until Atlantis collapses:

-00:00:29'

Tae-hyuk trembled as he saw the message in front of him.

20 affinity points had disappeared in an instant. But the danger was right in front of him.

Tae-hyuk stopped thinking. First, he had to move to as safe a spot as possible to avoid this.

“Noona. You trust me right?”

“Huh? Yes?”

“Then run! From here...”

The time was dwindling as the two people talked.

27 seconds.

26 seconds...

Tae-hyuk gritted his teeth. He grabbed the wrist of Yoo Ha-yang and the guide and started running.

“Ah, G-Guest-nim! If you act like this here...!”

“I don’t have time to explain! Escape right now!”

“Huh? All of a sudden, what...?”

Tae-hyuk gritted his teeth.

Tae-hyuk activated the Violence skill. People were watching, but he couldn’t afford to worry about that.

[You have activated the Violence skill.]

-Muscle strength and agility are strengthened.

Suddenly, Tae-hyuk was holding a long iron pipe in his hand.

And he ran.

If he stayed here any longer, then he would be crushed by the falling tanks. Tae-hyuk started to run towards the point where the

escalator ended, holding both people’s hands.

-00:00:01’

There was the sound of a huge explosion.



# Chapter 60 – It Seems Like Something Is Going On #2

---

“Uh, get down!”

Kuwaaaang!

Tae-hyuk leaned down reflexively at the explosion. The bomb had already exploded. After a few seconds, the aftermath of the explosion would hit. Fortunately, Tae-hyuk’s stats were reinforced by the Violence skill, making it possible to move beyond humanly possible speeds.

Tae-hyuk bit his lip. Moonlight Flower was one step ahead of Tae-hyuk and was hiding her body in a safe place.

However, the problem was the guide. She thought that there was some accident, and was standing still like a broken mannequin. Therefore, she would get caught in the explosion and receive a big injury.

A person who received a great shock would be frozen in place. If they were able to cope with the situation then they could live. But if they were in a blank state and couldn’t do anything, leading to their deaths. She was in such a state.

Tae-hyuk reflexively kicked her leg.

“Kyak!”

She screamed as her body curved like a bow. Tae-hyuk grabbed the falling guide and rolled down the stairs in a hugging position. They rolled a few metres in an instant.

Kukukukung!

A little later, the shock wave hit the surprised people. Fortunately, he had fallen down considerably and could avoid any direct hits. Flames appeared just above his head. The surviving people started to scream.

It looked like Hell had arrived on Earth. Tae-hyuk had seen a similar situation before. It was just a few days ago, when he had participated in a death game where dozens of people could die.

However, that was an area where human nature caused the deaths. What was happening here was far beyond that. If he didn't know anything then he would've lost his life.

Tae-hyuk bit his lip as he rolled across the ground. The good news was that he was somehow spared. It was a result of the warning from the Demon Revealing Mirror.

‘A hidden ability of the Spying skill...’

It consumed a staggering 20 affinity points in order to warn of a crisis. There were still many things about the crime skill that he

didn't know yet. The problem was that it wouldn't be mentioned unless the conditions were met.

‘Perhaps there are conditions like collecting more than 20 affinity points.’

His affinity points had disappeared in an instant, but he didn't feel regret since it had saved his life.

‘...Well. In fact, it is a waste. Damn!’

Tae-hyuk moaned with a pained expression.

Anyway, he once again realized how valuable affinity points were. This wasn't a game, but was like having an extra life in reality. If he could afford it then he would have to stockpile over 20 points.

“.....”

Tae-hyuk let go of the unconscious guide and stood up. Yoo Ha-yang, who was hiding behind a protruding structure, came out from hiding. She was looking around with eyes that were as wide as a meerkat. She smiled brightly as soon as she found Tae-hyuk.

“Wah, you're alive!”

Tae-hyuk shrugged and said with a strict, but sincere expression.

“You are also alive. Did you hide alone in a safe place?”

“Hehehe...”

Tae-hyuk sighed.

He couldn't hate a woman like that.

“Let's get out of here. Soon the water tanks will collapse and the water will pour out.”

“Hup!”

Yoo Ha-yang closed her mouth and nodded. Tae-hyuk inwardly exclaimed.

Moonlight Flower – Yoo Ha-yang. She showed more speed than him, despite Tae-hyuk being enhanced by the Violence skill. Maybe she could have survived even without his warning. She had a foolishly pure personality, but he had confidence in her physical abilities.

Tae-hyuk said quietly.

“We will go down first.”

“Do you know a safe place to go?”

“Yes. For now.”

Kukukung!

Tae-hyuk confirmed the status of the huge tanks. There was a lot of cracking as if the water would pour out in that moment.

There was a room down there. It couldn't completely stop the water but it was better than outside. Tae-hyuk closed his eyes for a moment before running towards the door while carrying the guide.

---

[Agility has increased due to your rapid actions beyond your limits.]

Stamina (59), Intelligence (47), Agility (29), Dexterity (39)

The message from the Demon Revealing Mirror flashed in front of Tae-hyuk's eyes. He had definitely exceeded his limits. If he hesitated for even a moment, then he would've been caught by the water pouring down from the tanks.

“W-What the hell is going on?”

Yoo Ha-yang asked with a serious expression.

“It’s what it sounds like. A bomb.”

“Ah... I always thought that such things were on the news. But I still managed to live. Ahaha... What a disaster movie.”

Ha-yang was laughing in these circumstances. Tae-hyuk was shocked and he was starting to doubt her mental state.

The guide was still unconscious.

Tae-hyuk examined the area that they were currently in. It was a passage with dim lighting, a place that led from the 4B floor of Atlantis to the amenities. If he kept moving along the passageway, then he would find places such as restaurants and arcades.

Outside of the door was water, and this place also wouldn’t last long. He didn’t have to worry about breathing due to the ventilation system, but he couldn’t wait forever.

“Let’s go inside. This place won’t hold out for long.”

Tae-hyuk tapped the firmly closed door with his finger.

Ha-yang nodded.

Water was already seeping through the cracks. They had to move to a deeper place to avoid the water coming in here. The passage, which led to the theater and various facilities, was as complicated as a maze.

Tae-hyuk sighed. The outward passage was already blocked by water. They were like trapped rats.

Ha-yang started to search the passage with a serious expression. Then she said,

“I think there is only one way to get out of here.”

“Is it the ventilation ducts?”

“Eh? How did you know?”

Ha-yang gazed at Tae-hyuk with wide eyes. In fact, Tae-hyuk knew what was happening now.

The Atlantis sinking incident. It was a famous disaster that was the prelude to the appearance of the bomber, Kim Tae-sung. The bomb that detonated and caused dozens of casualties was just the beginning.

The more vicious thing was that he installed it in the place with huge water tanks, containing thousands of tons of water. They

were made of special material that didn't break even when shot. However, they were unable to withstand the high temperatures of the explosion and shattered. In the end, the enormous amount of water hit the survivors.

The original architecture had a place built underground to escape from a situation just like this. But for some reason, it was missing. After the accident occurred and hundreds of people died, people started calling for punishment. In the end, the culprit was a senior official who received hundreds of millions in bribes from large corporations. The bereaved families even held a hunger strike. However, it ended without any proper punishment.

‘The conclusion was that hundreds of people died due to two criminals.’

He lost his appetite.

Tae-hyuk sighed as he confirmed the message in front of him. He was able to gain one affinity point for saving the guide. Many people died in this incident, but that didn't mean that there were no survivors. Tae-hyuk knew how they survived. They escaped through the vents.

Then he replied to Ha-yang.

“In movies like this, the people would escape through the vents.”

“That's right! Most underground facilities are linked to the



outside. In the end, we need to find the way there...”

Ha-yang was a thief so she was familiar with the layout of buildings. She paused briefly with a troubled expression.

“...The problem is that this is an unnecessarily complex structure. If I had enough time then I would be able to find a way out, but... Well, I think I am lacking time.”

“That certainly is true. The time limit should be around 30 minutes.”

Ha-yang nodded at Tae-hyuk’s words.

“I don’t know the structure...”

Tae-hyuk’s eyes flashed at those words.

“Noona. If you know the structure of the place, will you be able to get out?”

“O-Of course! I am a thief as well.”

Tae-hyuk knew a way to understand the structure of this place. It was to use a crime skill.

‘I can analyze this place using the Spying skill. Then create a map

using the Forgery skill...’

Tae-hyuk manipulated the Demon Revealing Mirror to examine the details of the Spying skill. He could reinforce the skill by investing affinity points. There was something that would be useful right now.

‘Extend Spying range...!’

It was necessary for Spying to be used on the whole building. But he didn’t have enough points for that. Tae-hyuk currently only had one affinity point. He needed 10 points. In order to get it...

Tae-hyuk looked at Ha-yang. He said with a serious expression.

“The details are hard to explain but there is a way to get an overview of this place. But in order to do that, you need to save others. I need Noona’s strength.”

He couldn’t talk about the crime skills. But Yoo Ha-yang knew that Tae-hyuk had some special abilities. He might be her only hope of getting out of here.

“Ahaha. Staying calm even in this situation... In fact, despite my words... I’m really scared right now... This is the first time. I joked around but there really was a bomb... Furthermore, I don’t know when the water will come in here. Then the vents will be dangerous. I didn’t even think about what to do until just before. But do you really have a way to get out of this place?”

Ha-yang was smiling brightly. But her eyes were shaking.

Tae-hyuk didn't miss this. He nodded without saying anything.

“If so, I will help you. Like you saved countless people from the Death Circus, can you save me?”

“It is over when I get my date home.”

The tension disappeared from Yoo Ha-yang's face.

“Ahaha. Even in a situation like this... At any rate, I'll do it. Give me instructions.”

Tae-hyuk laughed. Of course he meant his words.

Besides, it didn't end when he escaped from here. The bomber Kim Tae-sung had appeared three months early. In order to fight him, Yoo Ha-yang's help was needed. He couldn't let her die in a place like this.

Tae-hyuk quickly and accurately issued instructions.

“Cell phone?”

“Yes. However, the radio waves don't work.”

“That is enough. As long as you can check the time. There are certainly a few survivors in this space. Find as many as possible and direct to the...”

Tae-hyuk recalled as much of the structure of this place as possible. He remembered the place that the water didn't reach until the last moment. He told Ha-yang that place.

“I understand. Then I'll be there in exactly 600 seconds.”

“Yes. At least three people... No, I would like four or more if possible.”

“Yes! Leave it to me!”

Ha-yang disappeared into the darkness. Her animal senses would surely save a lot of people.

He gazed at the affinity points showing on the Demon Revealing Mirror.

Tae-hyuk sighed and looked at the guide. He needed to deal with her then look for other survivors.

---

“Have you recovered?”

Tae-hyuk asked after slapping the guide on the cheek.

“Uh, yes... A-Am I alive?”

The guide tearfully said. She had been in shock and lost her mind for a moment.

“But if you don’t get out of here in a hurry then it will probably be flooded.”

“Ah...”

The guide looked around. They were in a deeper place, not outside.

“Then I am going to find other survivors. Go to the underground game centre and wait there.”

The guide’s face instantly paled. It looked as though she thought that Tae-hyuk was abandoning her.

“N-No! Are you trying to run away alone? I-I’m going to follow you!”

“In such a state?”

The guide's feet were shaking. It seemed like she wouldn't be able to walk properly without receiving any support.

"I-I will still follow. P-Please..."

"I'm not really throwing you away. Please just wait. I will come to pick you up soon."

He didn't have time to keep talking like this. Tae-hyuk turned around to look for other survivors.

Deopsseok!

The guide threw her body and grabbed Tae-hyuk. She clung desperately to his body. It was like she would die right away if she let go.

"Ugh... Really frustrating."

"I-I am Oh Soo-ah. P-Please take me along. I'll do whatever you want."

"I mean, just wait a minute!"

"Then you will go away!"

There was no end to this. Tae-hyuk eventually decided on

something. He pulled Soo-ah up from where she was holding on to his right leg.

Then he said with a smile.

“Soo-ah noona. Do you want to see a magic trick?”

“Huh? A-All of a sudden?”

Tae-hyuk clapped and raised his palms in front of his body. Then he shouted.

“This is the only magic that I know!”

Tae-hyuk pulled apart his hands and revealed the underwear she was wearing. Soo-ah’s face turned red at the familiar piece.

“Kyaaaack!”

Tae-hyuk gave a rotten smile while holding the black lace underwear.

“I wanted to end it with only one thing but you tied up my arms and legs...”

He absolutely didn’t steal this. It was made from magic!

Tae-hyuk removed Soo-ah's arms and moved to find another survivor.

“Fortunately, there were no witnesses. Ohuhu... It was completely a crime!”

Soo-ah was left being with a red face. However, the lace underwear wasn't enough to break her.



# Chapter 61 – It Seems Like Something Is Going On #3

---

The affinity points could only be obtained from people related to the blacklist. In other words, he wouldn't get anything if he saved people not related to the blacklist.

Tae-hyuk had smashed the Death Circus and saved the lives of hundreds of people, but had only gotten 20 affinity points. In other words, those 20 points represented the number of victims Choi Sung-yeol and Kim Joon-young would've killed in the future.

They didn't kill the participants directly; they only crafted extreme situations to make people kill each other. Most of the victims died at the hands of other participants, which is why he didn't get as much as he hoped after saving a lot of people.

However, this time he was sure. The culprit was an IED, a mass killer on the rampage with bombs.

Tae-hyuk clearly remembered from the blacklist. If he saved the victims of this case then he could gain a lot of affinity points.

Tae-hyuk remembered everything he could about the disaster at Atlantis. He was able to guess the situation to a certain extent because it had been blasted on the news every day. The water in the tanks completely filled up the third underground floor and slowly overflowed, eventually reaching the fourth floor.

Fortunately, it was just recently opened so most of the audience was gathered on the first and second basement floors. If the capacity of the tanks was slightly larger, than the damage would have been several times greater. There were perhaps around 30~40 people here, and he had to get them out as soon as possible.

“Kuoong.”

But it wasn't as easy as he thought.

Tae-hyuk found someone hiding in the dining room and tried to persuade him.

“Staying here is dangerous! I know a way out.”

“There was definitely an announcement to stay where I am!”

‘Damn...’

Tae-hyuk clicked his tongue.

Someone had broadcasted a message that a small problem had occurred and that they were trying to recognize what it was. Therefore, don't move and remain at your current position.

The one who made the announcement was probably Kim Tae-sung.

‘It turned out like this.’

Tae-hyuk bit his lip.

When a person received conflicting information, they would always choose the more reliable one. The announcement was more reliable than someone who looked like a gangster. In the end, he wouldn't be able to save anyone here if they didn't believe him.

Yoo Ha-yang was probably suffering for the same reason.

‘I need to confront authority with authority.’

Tae-hyuk headed to the broadcasting room in a corner of the 4B floor. The door lock was firmly locked. Tae-hyuk smiled and muttered,

“I’m sorry, but I have a key to open any lock.”

Tae-hyuk grabbed his iron pipe with both hands and swung it using all his strength.

Kang!

Iron hit iron and sparks emerged. He was able to confirm that the lock had loosened.

“Um. How about one more time? Well, I will keep going until it works!”

Tae-hyuk took advantage of his centrifugal force to open it. The attack that burst out had great destructive power, thanks to the Violence skill. In less than 10 seconds, the iron lock was shattered and Tae-hyuk was able to enter the broadcasting room. It was an unauthorized intrusion, but Tae-hyuk wasn't going to worry about such things.

“Isn't it enough if they don't notice?”

Tae-hyuk entered the room and looked around.

“It is simple.”

There were several chairs and machinery for broadcasting. Tae-hyuk could make an announcement. But then he saw a strange device installed on the machine, a recorder connected to a clock that was attached to the timer switch of the broadcast device.

That only meant one thing.

“Crazy...”

Tae-hyuk quickly realized what it was supposed to do. It was the identity of the person who made the announcement.

“Shit. Who installed this?”

Tae-hyuk separated the recorder from the machine and pressed the power button. Then a voice was heard, mixed with some noises.

-This is the management. The park is currently experiencing a small trouble and we are investigating the cause of it. Although it is somewhat noisy now, please wait where you are.

The timer showed that it was broadcast exactly six minutes ago.

“In the end, people died because of this broadcast without even knowing it.”

Tae-hyuk sighed.

He didn't like it. There was only one way to counter this. He manipulated the Demon Revealing Mirror at lightning speed to activate Voice Modulation.

[Voice Modulation has been used.]

-You can imitate the voice of Kim Tae-sung.

‘That bastard Kim Tae-sung...’

The identity behind the voice was Kim Tae-sung, and the timer device attached to the recorder was obviously something used for his IEDs as well.

‘Well, I will be releasing that firecracker soon.’

Tae-hyuk looked at his body. There were bruises on the area where he had rolled around less than one hour ago. Furthermore, he continuously used the Violence skill. All his muscles would be in hell tomorrow.

Tae-hyuk manipulated the broadcasting device and turned on the power. The practice he had in speaking would be useful.

Tae-hyuk coughed a few times to check that the voice was correct before speaking.

“This is the management. It has been confirmed that the cause of the disturbance is damage to the water tanks. All of the fourth floor will likely be submerged within 20 minutes. Please gather in the central plaza and evacuate in the manner provided by the guide.”

Tae-hyuk turned off the microphone. Now he no longer needed to argue with people to save them.

He checked the time and there were four minutes remaining. How many people could he save?

He would go to the places that he thought would have people. He could probably save seven or eight people. The only thing left was to see how many Yoo Ha-yang could secure.

“Anyway, let’s get another rise in agility today...!”

Tae-hyuk started running again beyond his limits.

---

In the end, Tae-hyuk headed to the central plaza with nine people. Those who listened to the broadcast followed Tae-hyuk obediently. Thus he could gather more people than he previously thought.

Yoo Ha-yang just needed to rescue one person for him to gain enough affinity points to have his plan succeed.

‘Isn’t it almost time?’

Tae-hyuk looked at the floor. Without realizing it, the water was up to his thighs.

Nevertheless, there were still people waiting for the next instructions. The water would gradually rise until they could no longer move. Most people were gathered in the same space so he could rescue nine people in four minutes.

No one sensed any danger as they followed him. Everyone else was quiet so they should do so as well. In addition, there was the broadcast. Even if it seemed a little dangerous, everything would be fine; it was that type of crowd psychology.

Kim Tae-sung used the bomb to exploit that.

A sound emerged from Tae-hyuk's mouth as soon as he got to the central plaza.

“1-17?”

Yoo Ha-yang brought almost twice his number. Tae-hyuk cut through the people and said to Yoo Ha-yang.

“Noona. How did you collect so many people in four minutes?”

“Huh? It wasn't four minutes. It was 10 minutes.”

“So... People followed you before the broadcast?”

Yoo Ha-yang was baffled.

“Ah, that broadcast was Tae-hyuk? But people just followed me because they wanted to go with me.”

“Eh?”



Tae-hyuk realized that the vast majority of people here were men. Yoo Ha-yang's looks were pretty enough for her to become a celebrity right now. It was natural for men to not refuse to go with Ha-yang. He couldn't help laughing. When he thought about it, he had been defeated by beauty.

Tae-hyuk imitated Kim Bum-soo's voice using Voice Modulation. Then he shouted towards the people gathered.

"All of you were suddenly assembled here so I don't think you understand the situation. However, this is a very urgent situation. Thank you for your understanding."

Then a big man opened his mouth.

"Is this place really flooding?"

"That's right. The proof is the water on the floor."

"Hah."

Sighs emerged here and there.

"Isn't rescue coming?"

"The third underground floor is completely immersed in water. Perhaps the earliest time will be in one hour. However, we will be

completely covered in water in 10 minutes.”

“T-Then we are going to die!”

“There is only one way to escape. It is through the vents in the ceiling.”

“But if we go to the wrong place and head to the third underground floor then we can’t go back.”

“That...”

Tae-hyuk paused for a moment, then continued in Kim Bum-soo’s distinctive charismatic voice.

“Fortunately, I know where the blueprints to this place is. I plan to check it for a safe route and then we will escape.”

“Oh!”

Exclamations popped out. Tae-hyuk took a deep breath.

‘Now give me the points! Don’t make me dizzy waiting!’

Obviously he should get affinity points for the people here. He fiddled with the Demon Revealing Mirror. Then he received the notification message he had been waiting for. Perhaps it was

caught in a lag.

[26 affinity points have been acquired.]

[You can use the affinity points to enhance crime skills or activate hidden attributes.]

‘T-That’s great!’

Tae-hyuk inwardly cheered. Along with the one point from Oh Soo-ah, he had 27 points.

“Then wait a few minutes and I will bring back the blueprint.”

He couldn’t use Spying and Forgery with so many eyes on him. Just as Tae-hyuk was about to move, a man asked sharply.

“Ah, I am Yoo Tae-soo. By the way, if there is no time then why didn’t you get the blueprint in advance?”

Tae-hyuk smiled lightly as he replied,

“A few minutes is enough. I don’t think there will be any problems.”

“I am just wondering if we can all escape within the time limit. If you made a mistake by not getting the blueprint in advance, will you be responsible if someone else dies?”

Yoo Tae-soo felt like an enemy.

“If that situation comes up then I will be the last one to leave. So are there any problems?”

“.....”

Yoo Tae-soo closed his mouth.

Tae-hyuk hurriedly moved to a place where he could avoid their eyes.

---

He first invested 10 affinity points into buying the new attribute for the Spying skill. Among the items, he selected the ‘Extend Range’ one and there was the sound effect of success.

[A new attribute has been given to the Spying skill.]

-The area that can be detected has increased.

Now he had 17 points remaining. Tae-hyuk boldly used 15 points to strengthen the Forgery skill.

‘Rapid Production.’

It was an attribute that increased his production speed.

“This isn’t the salary of a worker... By affinity points fell to two in an instant.”

Both of them boasted a tremendous performance so they cost a lot of points.

“Now, Spying!”

Tae-hyuk manipulated the Demon Revealing Mirror and activated Spying. At that time, it felt like pain like a hot iron was poking him in every nerve.

“Kuaah... Oof!”

Tae-hyuk hurriedly covered his mouth with both hands to block the scream that escaped. He wasn’t far from the place where everyone was gathered, so he couldn’t show them anything strange. His senses expanded by hundreds of times to cover all of Atlantis.

“W-What is this...?”

His brain was burning from the pain! It seemed as if his body couldn't withstand the crime skill, but he had to hang in there.

Tae-hyuk gritted his teeth and shoved all the information in his head.

9%...

‘Crazy, it is only 9% done?’

Tae-hyuk watched the progress on the Demon Revealing Mirror. It was 10 seconds of hell. It might be because his stats had already exceeded the limit. His eyes turned bloodshot.

“Ah, I still have a step left!”

Now it was time to draw the blueprint using the Forgery skill. He used trembling fingers to manipulate the Demon Revealing Mirror and activate Forgery.

Then the world was accelerating. Time flowed in milliseconds. Then nanoseconds and so on...

As time flowed thousands of times faster, Tae-hyuk saw a hallucination where everything was broken into pieces. The two minutes felt like eternity.

“Cough...!”

Tae-hyuk puked up something black as soon as it finished. His intestines were clearly damaged, and therefore he knew that the skill he used now wasn't possible with the body of a Commoner.

At the very least, Noble...

No, he had to be a King in order to use it effortlessly. However, he had used it with a Commoner's body. And it was a success.

Tae-hyuk looked at the blueprint in front of him. Everything was perfectly contained in a 841mm by 594 mm piece of paper.

With this, they would be able to go anywhere. Everything needed for the escape from Atlantis was prepared.

Tae-hyuk wiped off the blood at his mouth with his sleeve and laughed. He repeated a line of dialogue from a famous artist.

“How is it? Simple, right?”

# Chapter 62 – It Seems Like Something Is Going On #4

---

“Pant... Pant...”

Tae-hyuk started breathing roughly. The status of his body wasn't good because he had used extreme crime skills.

“But I finished...!”

Tae-hyuk deliberately erased Atlantis from his mind. If he kept remembering it then it felt like his brain would burst. Either way, there was no time left. Tae-hyuk grabbed the blueprint and returned to where the people were gathered.

“Uh, he is here!”

It was less than five minutes but there was a lot of nervousness on people's faces. Their lives were in Tae-hyuk's hands.

“T-The blueprint?”

“Here it is.”

Tae-hyuk pulled out an A3 paper out of his sleeve and showed it to people. It contained everything about Atlantis.



Yoo Tae-soo, who was watching from the side, started to scoff.

“It isn’t printed but hand-drawn. Is this correct?”

Tae-hyuk shrugged,

“If you don’t have faith then you can go where you want.”

“Cough.”

Yoo Tae-soo had a worried expression but he didn’t have any other options.

He poured out his doubts towards Tae-hyuk towards the other guests.

“Can we really trust him? All of a sudden, he suddenly got a nice blueprint of this place. The contents are also doubtful.”

At that time, a middle-aged man walked forward.

“I am an architect. If you feel doubt then I can show you the certification in my wallet. Can I take a look at that blueprint?”

Tae-hyuk’s eyes narrowed.

The water had already reached his waist. It would be a close call,

even if they started to escape now. But what would happen if he refused?

Right now, only Yoo Tae-soo was suspicious; however, it might spread even more. It was better to take a little time then to escape with non-cooperative people.

“Take a look.”

“I’ll do it as quickly as possible.”

The architect put on glasses and started to examine the blueprint created by Tae-hyuk. After one minute, he said with wide eyes.

“It is a perfect blueprint. The scale, perspective and marks are all unquestionable. It is made so well that I want to employ the architect who drew it. Most of the time, it isn’t good to draw by hand. It reminds me of how I used to work a long time ago.”

“Ohh!”

Those who were watching sighed with relief at the architect’s words.

“I know it is made well. Is there evidence that it is the exact design of this place?”

Yoo Tae-soo still had a doubtful expression on his face. Tae-hyuk

spat at him.

“Yoo Tae-soo, I don’t know why you are so dissatisfied, as there is already no time. Stop. If you feel doubt then it doesn’t matter if you stay here. I don’t have a mission to save everyone who is here.”

Tae-hyuk said, causing Yoo Tae-soo to laugh.

“Look at this! How shameless! Do you believe him?”

Tae-hyuk narrowed his eyes and glared at Yoo Tae-soo. He wouldn’t feel troubled about saving that guy now. If Tae-hyuk’s body condition was a bit better, then he would’ve hit him with a steel pipe. However, he didn’t have enough stamina to use the Violence skill. He was at his limit due to the extreme crime skills.

At that time, Yoo Ha-yang glared at Yoo Tae-soo and scolded him.

“You. Don’t you know that Seo Tae-hyuk is struggling and risking his life to save people?”

“Huh?”

“I-I don’t know what happened but his body has turned into a mess.”

Yoo Ha-yang stared at Tae-hyuk with moist eyes before asking in

a trembling voice,

“T-Tae-hyuk, are you okay? What happened? You sound like you are dying...”

Tae-hyuk sighed.

She was a really good girl.

“I’m fine. First, let’s think about escaping.”

“...Yes. I understand.”

Yoo Ha-yang’s words showed an authenticity that couldn’t be acting. The people felt confidence and started yelling at Yoo Tae-soo.

“What are you doing now? Do you feel good? Why aren’t you trying to save us?”

“If you can’t take responsibility then stay quietly in a corner!”

“If you are so disgruntled then go on your own!”

Yoo Tae-soo instantly became isolated. However, he showed no signs of concern on his face at all. He leisurely pulled out a gun, like he was taking out a business card.

“I was already thinking about that.”

Yoo Tae-soo smiled as he aimed the muzzle at Tae-hyuk. The people around him paled.

“It would be nice if you didn’t move. Ah. I will correct myself. Feel free to move, and then you will suffer.”

“W-What are you doing?”

Yoo Tae-soo said with a sneer,

“I am in a difficult situation right now, so I have to live alone.”

“D-Don’t tell me...!”

“That’s right. I am in charge of this place. And if you guests live then I will have to go to jail. Hah! I can’t allow you to appear on TV as you like. Staying still? I never issued such instructions. But why is this all my responsibility?”

“Then you want to kill the rest of us so you can live?!”

“Of course. I can manipulate everything that happened here at will.”

“What? You completely crazy bastard!”

“Haha. Don’t worry. I will make sure that the public knows about your sacrifices. And you will live forever in their hearts.”

“Fuck! How many people are here now? Can you deal with this many people alone? Everyone pounce!”

A man angrily rushed towards Yoo Tae-soo. Yoo Tae-soo fired at the man with a calm face.

“Kyaaak!”

Sparks flew as the man collapsed.

“.....!”

“I won’t stop those who want to go to the other side with him. There are a limited number of bullets and only 10 minutes remain, so first come first served.”

In the end, sacrifices were needed in order to overthrow Yoo Tae-soo. But how many people would be able to do that for something they met today? In the end, no one moved and the strange standoff continued. In the meantime, water was constantly rising so they could tell the limit.

Yoo Tae-soo aimed the gun at Tae-hyuk again and said,

“Hand me the blueprint unless you want to die right now.”

Tae-hyuk made a slightly difficult expression. Then he spoke loud enough for others to hear,

“I can be a hero if I use my body to subdue that person now. Of course, I will die from a hole in my body but others will be saved.”

“What? Do you really want to do that? Do you want to demonstrate such a great sacrifice?”

Tae-hyuk laughed,

“But I’m not a hero. At best, I am just a criminal. Yes. I understand. I will hand the blueprint over to you.”

Then the people shrieked. If so, all the people remaining here would die. However, no one else rushed forward. Going forward meant they would be killed by Yoo Tae-soo’s gun. One person had already died. If 10 people sacrificed themselves, then the rest could live. However, the ones that went forward...

There was only one person. Yoo Ha-yang approached Tae-hyuk while there was a ruckus and spoke in a small voice.

“...I will get that person’s attention. Meanwhile, you will knock him down.”

“Aigoo. No matter how great your physical abilities are, even Noona can’t avoid all the bullets.”

“B-But somebody should do it.”

“Noona. You will die.”

“...It’s okay. No, it doesn’t matter. I made up my mind after listening to Tae-hyuk’s words. If somebody has to be a hero, I will do it. Remember that.”

Yoo Ha-yang smiled brightly. It was the face of a hero who decided to sacrifice herself to save others.

“In the end, it will be Noona who dies here alone. Is it really okay?”

“Yes.”

Tae-hyuk stared at Yoo Ha-yang. Her eyes were filled with a strong will.

According to his memories, she was a weird thief who stole from chaebols. Was there a reason for this?

Tae-hyuk couldn’t understand it. But he couldn’t let Yoo Ha-yang die here.



“I would rather you walk away from here than me. In fact, I have a plan to deal with Yoo Tae-soo.”

Yoo Ha-yang’s face turned red.

“W-What? If you have something like that then say it quickly! If you plan to hit him alone...”

Tae-hyuk raised a finger to his lips. Yoo Ha-yang closed her mouth with amazement.

“Yoo Tae-soo I understand. Here is the blueprint. Instead, you can’t hurt anyone else here. You have to promise.”

“Hahaha! It is understandable. Humans are selfish. There aren’t any fools who would sacrifice themselves for others!”

There was one such fool. Tae-hyuk looked at Yoo Ha-yang and smiled.

“N-Now we will all die!”

“N-No! I don’t want to die!”

“P-Please spare me. I’ll do whatever you want!”

The people started begging for their lives. They were thinking extreme thoughts.

Tang!

Yoo Tae-soo fired at the ground.

“Kyaaaak!”

There were no longer any protests as Tae-hyuk handed the blueprint to Yoo Tae-soo.

“I would like to thank you for using Atlantis Theme Park today. You can’t come back. Enjoy your remaining time.”

Then Yoo Tae-soo quickly entered the vents. He left with one last remark.

“I will tell the world that there was a stupid hero who wanted to save everyone here but couldn’t do it. Wuhahaha!”

“C-Catch him!”

He couldn’t shoot his gun as he entered the vent. From now on, they were safe. In the end, there were those who moved to catch Yoo Tae-soo. However, they couldn’t move quickly because of the rising water. They missed him.

“D-Damn...”

“We’re all dead!”

Tae-hyuk looked at the corpse of the man with a gentle expression. He took a moment of silence. The man had died in order to save everyone, but there was no one mourning his death. In front of the hero, Tae-hyuk slowly bowed his head.

When he raised it, he was the criminal Seo Tae-hyuk.

“The hero died alone, and only the culprit survived.”

Tae-hyuk pulled out the real blueprint.

“W-Wait a minute. T-That!”

“T-That!”

“Another blueprint?!”

The people shrieked in glee.

“I thought it would be like this so I made a fake.”

“Ahaha! Amazing. We’re saved! We can live!”

Tae-hyuk knew that his physical condition wasn't good, and from his previous memories, he remembered that there was only one survivor on the fourth underground floor, the floor that had the most victims.

Yoo Tae-soo, the owner of this place. The reason he survived then wasn't too different to the situation now.

Tae-hyuk muttered in a small voice.

“You don't know that map is wrong and will be moving towards hell. Once I get out, I will tell the story about the clown who tried to kill everyone here.”

Tae-hyuk hurriedly led the people out. They couldn't even waste one second.

---

Tae-hyuk first passed the blueprint to the architect. He was skilled so he would lead the people from the front.

“W-What will you do?”

“I will look at the situation and follow when suitable.”

“Yes. Then I will definitely lead people from the front. R-Really...

Thank you!”

The architect bowed humbly. Tae-hyuk clicked his tongue.

“Say thank you if you survive. Now hurry.”

“Yep!”

The people calmly followed Tae-hyuk’s instructions.

The water was already up to their chests. Furthermore, the speed was getting faster. It was obvious that this space would be completely covered in water in a few minutes. Under these circumstances, more than 20 people entered the vents.

Was it due to the sacrifice of the nameless hero? No one fell into panic.

There were only five people remaining. Tae-hyuk told Yoo Ha-yang who was helping the people.

“Noona. Stop now and escape first. I will follow right behind you.”

“W-What? Follow right... Do you want to see my underwear? It’s too fast. That’s it. I will send people until the end. Go first.”

Tae-hyuk sighed. There was no time to argue.

“Then I’ll go first. Noona, be sure to come along.”

“Yes.”

Yoo Ha-yang laughed at him.

Tae-hyuk didn’t look back as he entered the vent. That was a man. So she liked it.

“Now, everybody hurry! I will kick your butt if the distance increases!”

“U-Understood.”

The people remaining escaped one by one. Yoo Ha-yang remained until the end, pushing them from behind to allow them to enter the vent easier.

“N-Now I will get out...”

At that last minute, the place where she was present was completely submerged in water.

---

At first, she thought he was just a kid. But he wasn't like that. It was amazing to see him bargain with Big Mama and finally recover the thing that he wanted. In addition, she saw him saving many people from the Death Circus.

It was the appearance of a hero that Yoo Ha-yang longed for.

–Daddy. Why did you fire the employees?

–It is in order to live.

–Then the fired employees...

–Ha-yang. Don't forget that you will also have to live this way.

– .....

Something popped up in Yoo Ha-yang's head.

Signs of her life, words she remembered. She felt everything so vividly. Was this a kaleidoscope?

–F-Father. Why is the security so easy to penetrate? If something goes wrong then their personal information might be leaked and they might become the victim of voice phishing or card fraud!

–It doesn't really matter. It will never happen anyway.

-We have to prevent such a thing.

-Don't pay attention to it. Anyway, it's not the people giving us money whose personal information is stolen.

-T-That...

-No matter what we do, it won't change. Yoo Ha-yang. Get rid of the illusion that you are a hero. You are just a security company employee. Aren't you parachuting off me?

- .....

Yoo Ha-yang hated chaebols. The people sat on their thrones and hated ruling over so many people. She wanted to show them a spicy taste.

Therefore, Yoo Ha-yang decided to become a thief who only stole from chaebols. She was confident in her physical abilities. She also had extensive knowledge from working at the security company.

But in the end, she didn't do anything right and would die like this... Strangely, she didn't feel regret.

In the last minute, she had become the person she had been longing for.



Yoo Ha-yang felt something warm before she lost consciousness.

---

“...Ha-yang! Yoo Ha-yang! Steady yourself!”

Tae-hyuk shook Ha-yang’s body and called her name. At the same time, he slapped her cheeks.

“U...Uh...”

She groaned as water poured out from her mouth.

Ha-yang slowly opened her eyes.

Tae-hyuk’s face was right in front of her. He was the first thing she saw. He looked confused. Was it because she almost died?

By the way, her name came out from his mouth. She had obviously never given him her real name.

“H-How did you get my name...?”

“That isn’t important now! I was really worried because you didn’t open your eyes after artificial respiration!”

“Ah... artificial respiration...”

Ha-yang raised a finger to her lips, which were wet with someone's saliva.

“My first kiss...”

“Aigoo. This Noonim... I rescued you from dying and crossing Jordan River, so it isn't your first kiss.”

“Ahaha... I-I lived.”

“Of course! What did I say? I saved Noona's life didn't I?”

“.....”

Seo Tae-hyuk had obviously rescued her. Yoo Ha-yang faced turned red as she remembered a warm touch. Had he been waiting near the entrance of the vent because he was worried about her?

“At any rate, reporters and police are outside. Noona and I don't have to meet those people. Let's just run away.”

“Yes. Then...”

Yoo Ha-yang realized her own heart when she was prepared to die. He was a little young but obviously...

Tae-hyuk said.

“Oh right, I need Noona’s help with something.”

“Yes. I’ll help you with anything.”

“I want to catch the culprit of this bombing case.”

Bomber Kim Tae-sung.

Tae-hyuk licked his lips. From now on, Tae-hyuk would move to catch him. It would be a bonus if he could learn a new crime skill. As Tae-hyuk thought about Kim Tae-sung, something on the Demon Revealing Mirror caught his eyes.

[Two affinity points have disappeared due to the destruction of the bond.]

“...Eh?”

Tae-hyuk’s eyes trembled.

Come to think of it, there were two people who didn’t escape. The man who threw his body in order to stop Yoo Tae-soo, and Yoo Tae-soo himself. In the end, his relationships with them had vanished.

As Tae-hyuk was upset over the loss, Yoo Ha-yang hugged his arm.

“Then let’s hurry. I am confident in running away! Believe in this Noona!”

Tae-hyuk sighed.

He decided to forget about the points that were blown away as a soft texture stimulated his arm.

## Chapter 63 – Bomber #1

---

It was late in the afternoon when an unidentified courier delivered a package to Gangdong Police Station. The first person to find it was a new policewoman from the city traffic department, who was cleaning when she found the box in a corner.

“Eh? Who is this for?”

Then an officer returning to work spoke to the policewoman.

“Isn’t it Detective Oh?”

“Ah, good job Sunbae-nim! Detective Oh?”

“Yes. He receives orders here because he can’t get them at home.”

It was one of the good things about not being married. Speaking of which-

Detective Oh was walking down the hallway when the new policewoman waved her hand.

“Detective Oh! Did you order something?”

Detective Oh stopped with a confused expression.

“What do you mean? My wife found my savings so I couldn’t even if I wanted to. Aigoo. That fishing rod...”

“Ahaha...”

The courier package wasn’t for Detective Oh. The policewoman looked at the courier box with suspicious eyes.

“Hrmm...”

“Something is fishy...”

Looking at the details, the recipient seemed to be Team 2 of the Kangdong Police Station. The sender address was written, but it wasn’t an actual address when they searched it up. The name written on the package was also fake.

The police officers groaned. Perhaps they had discovered something immense.

“What is going on?”

The policewoman’s eyes widened as a man’s voice was heard. A recently popular detective, Cho Kang-suk was glancing at them curiously.

“Ah, Detective Cho Kang-suk!”

He was the biggest celebrity at Kangdong Police Station. He threw his body at Yoo Cheol-ho, the escaped prisoner, who had the whole country in an uproar. Not long ago, he played a crucial role in arresting the hippo. Furthermore, he had recently been paying attention to his appearance, and was now like a wild detective from a movie.

The policewoman couldn't understand why he was still single. If he wasn't meeting anyone...

Her face turned red at the thought.

“Can I take a look at it for a moment?”

“Yes, yes! Take a look!”

The police officers raised their voices, as if they had met a famous celebrity.

Kang-suk coughed and eyed the courier box suspiciously.

The size seemed to be the smallest one available among the post office boxes, and the edges were slightly crushed from the delivery. He sniffed it but there weren't any smells coming from the package. That was all that could be seen from the outward appearance.

Kang-suk looked serious when he was told that this was left behind by a courier. It meant that moving it wasn't dangerous.

“Something heavy?”

He carefully lifted the box and noted that it had a considerable weight.

“Something is shaking. Is there liquid inside?”

Kang-suk thought back to the devices that he learned of back at the police academy. He might be making a fool of himself, but it wasn't bad to be careful. Kang-suk put the box on the table carefully and called Kim Do-shik.

“Inspector, it is Kang-suk. It seems like a bomb might have been delivered to the police station. Can you call EOD?”

Kang-suk asked Kim Do-shik to officially dispatch the explosives squad.

–What? I understand. Don't touch it!

A lazy afternoon.

There was an uproar among the police officers working in Kangdong Police Station.



IED.

A bomb was delivered.

---

“Be careful! Be careful...! If there is any wrong shock or jostle, then the entire police station could go flying away!”

Kim Do-shik gave instructions to the crew who specialized in handling explosives. There were various tools ranging from liquid nitrogen to shock absorbers on the table.

There were various forms among the homemade bombs, such as exploding when a certain impact was given or exploding when the box was opened. The most famous was the time bomb that was connected to a clock and exploded at the appointed time.

“It is opened.”

“Well done!”

The lid of the courier box was carefully opened so that no vibrations would be transmitted inside. Kim Do-shik’s eyes widened in an instant.

“T-This...!”

It was a plastic bowl filled with red liquid, with wires intricately connected to it like blood vessels connected to a heart.

Kim Do-shik's eyes flashed at the sight. He knew what this was all too well.

“...Liquid bomb!”

The explosives agent started to carefully explore what the liquid was.

“Fortunately, it doesn't seem to be methyl nitrate. It seems to be nitromethane.”

Kim Do-shik's expression changed slightly.

Methyl nitrate exploded by mixing with other liquids, even if there wasn't a detonator. However, nitromethane didn't burst unless there was a very strong impact.

The agent said carefully,

“This amount is enough for an entire street to fly away. However, there doesn't seem to be a detonator.”

“Hrmm? Detective Cho, did you find this? Is there another?”

Then Cho Kang-suk scratched his head and said.

“No. The two who found it were from the traffic department. I just found it suspicious.”

“Haha. You aren’t an expert, yet you realized that this is a homemade bomb.”

“It was also taught at the police academy... It was because I had a feeling.”

“As expected from Cho Kang-suk’s senses. At any rate, process that with the utmost care. Detective Cho will be responsible for finding the source and route of the courier.

Cho Kang-suk scratched his head as he heard Kim Do-shik’s words.

“Yes. I understand.”

Kang-suk wondered about the intentions of the perpetrator who sent this bomb to the police station, but he wasn’t Hyun-ho who majored in psychology. He just needed to catch the culprit. It seemed like he would have to work overnight again for a while.

At that moment, one woman came up in Kang-suk’s mind. He had his first date with her a while ago, and soon, they would meet again. Although it would be difficult for a while. He would confess at that time...

“Uh, can I see the courier box for a moment?”

Kang-suk noticed something strange.

“Sound recorder...?”

There was an old voice storage device placed in a corner of the box. Kang-suk asked the explosives disposal personnel.

“Is it okay to touch?”

“Yes. The detonator is removed. Even if there is a device that responds to vibration, it won’t break.”

“Hrmm...!”

Kang-suk carefully grabbed the tape recorder. He tried to check for the culprit’s fingerprints, but it had been wiped clean.

“What on earth is this?”

The homemade bomb looked mysterious to Kang-suk. It seemed like the culprit was an IED expert, which was rare in Korea. However, if they provided a tape recorder then they were clearly planning something. Kang-suk discovered the cassette tape in the recorder.

“Inspector. Let me check the content.”

Kim Do-shik nodded.

He clicked the button and heard a noise.

-Hello, police officers who are trying to implement justice today.

The voice sounded ridiculous, like the person had inhaled helium gas.

-You have seen my work. If you have the right experts then you will understand how powerful the bomb is.

At the moment, all eyes were focused on the explosive ordnance disposal personnel. The agent said carefully.

“If the bomb explodes in the city then I think there will be at least a few dozen deaths.”

“Haha...”

Kang-suk pressed the recorder that had been stopped.

-I have prepared a fun game for you. From now on, I will hide nine identical bombs all over the city center. If you can find them

all, then it is your win. Of course, you know what will happen if you miss even one.

“C-Crazy bastard...”

Kang-suk punched the wall. This wasn't a game to him. The culprit was literally declaring that they would bomb the city center. They also sent a bomb to the police like it was a challenge.

–I hope that the courier didn't arrive too late. The first bomb is scheduled at 10 a.m. on December 2nd. The place...

Kim Do-shik shouted.

“Fuck! That was four hours ago! Call and ask what the situation is like at Atlantis right now!”

But there was no need to do so. A person who had been speaking on the radio approached Kim Do-shik with a pale face.

“I-Inspector. There was a support request from Gangseo-gu right now”

“What? Wait a minute, that is where Atlantis is!”

“T-That... A huge explosion occurred at the marine theme park and hundreds of guests were using it...”

Kim Do-shik couldn't resist hitting the table with his fists. As the tape said, one bomb exploded. But the serious thing was that there were still eight remaining.

–Then I'll give you a hint about where the second bomb is hidden. If you want to give up the game then deposit 15 billion won into the designated account. Then I will tell you the location of all the bombs. Then I wish you luck.

At that moment, the Kangdong Police Station was turned upside down.

---

As soon as Tae-hyuk and Ha-yang got out of Atlantis, they headed for a family restaurant in a remote location. Once there, they had a simple meal and discussed future plans.

“Do you know how upset I was? I was really prepared to die.”

“Yes, and you almost died. If someone hadn't saved you...”

Tae-hyuk laughed as he looked at Ha-yang. Yoo Ha-yang's face and ears turned red.

“Uh, anyway. In return for my help, you should tell me everything this time.”

It seemed like she didn't like the fact that he didn't tell her about

the fake blueprint.

“I have to fool my allies to fool my enemies.”

“B-But!”

Ha-yang was too embarrassed to speak and wriggled her fingers.

“...I am different. It isn't the same.”

“Aigoo...”

Tae-hyuk answered with a small sigh. It seemed the clumsy thief had misunderstood something.

“I understand. I will tell you as much as possible.”

“Yes!”

Tae-hyuk took out a notebook and wrote down Kim Tae-sung's name.

“This is the culprit that caused the bombing. A crazy bastard.”

“Umm. By the way, I was wondering something. How do you know this?”



The question emerged.

He had to tell Ha-yang something to explain all the strangeness. Tae-hyuk made a sincere expression so she didn't think his words were a joke.

He raised his hand and said.

“That is because I am a tremendous genius.”

“G-Genius?”

“I have an IQ of more than 200 that surpasses Einstein and with my tremendous sense of reasoning, I can penetrate into the present and the future.

“...The present and the future? Reasoning?”

“Yes. Can I open the door of truth? It is simple to analyze human psychology and study the pattern of criminals.

“Wah. Amazing. If you have that ability then it is natural to hide it. I'm sure that there would be many people who want to use Tae-hyuk.

Tae-hyuk shrugged. It was a plausible lie, even to him.

“Yes. So Ha-yang noona should also keep it a secret.”

Ha-yang blinked and nodded.

“I-I see... Then that is how you know my name?”

Tae-hyuk pulled out his phone and showed his address book.

“I asked you to give me your number and you wrote it down. There was no need for any reasoning.”

“...Ah.”

“Anyway, Yoo Ha-yang. I think it is a name that really suits Noona.”

“Hehehe... Really?”

Ha-yang shook her head and started to twirl her fingers with embarrassment. Only Yoo Ha-yang would be deceived by such an obvious lie.

‘It is a perfect name for Noona, who is a fool.’

“Either way, I’ll go over Kim Tae-sung future movements with you. This isn’t the end of his bombs. There are eight more.”

“E-Eight?”

“And Kim Tae-sung asked for 15 billion won to prevent it. Of course, there isn’t an easy amount of money to give. In the end, the police will put a large number of people to find the bomb.”

“Yes.”

Tae-hyuk stopped and thought.

From now on, the words Ha-yang would hear would be shocking. Maybe she would betray him and become associates with Kim Tae-sung.

But according to his previous memories, there was no contact between Yoo Ha-yang and Kim Tae-sung. It would be Tae-hyuk’s fault if they were brought together. However, Yoo Ha-yang deserved to hear the truth.

“But his purpose is completely different. He doesn’t want money nor to kill discriminately.” He...”

Tae-hyuk spoke quietly as he began to describe Kim Tae-sung’s purpose. Then Yoo Ha-yang suddenly burst into tears.

“Uhhh, sob... T-Too much... Why did you tell me such things... Aaahhh!”

Tae-hyuk stroked Ha-yang's back as she started to cry like a child and spoke in a soft voice that seemed to calm Ha-yang down.

"I'll ask Noona once again. Do you still want to be my ally?"

"...Sob... My cowardice, this situation..."

"It's okay. Noona and Kim Tae-sung is different. Noona will never be Kim Tae-sung. If you do then I will stop it."

Did those words move Ha-yang's heart? Ha-yang slowly nodded at Tae-hyuk's words.

Tae-hyuk sighed with relief. If he hadn't saved Ha-yang's life then she might have betrayed him now.

Kim Tae-sung's purpose that he told her. It was to kill the chaebol who drove his family to their deaths.

## Chapter 64 – Bomber #2

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The hint of the location of the second bomb was hidden in a riddle. The police groaned after hearing it, but the remaining time was tight. They had to solve this mystery...

If they couldn't cope with this then they would be helpless like in the Atlantis situation. These words were said just before the tape ended.

–Oh right. Isn't it courteous to leave a nickname for you to call me? You can call me the Bomber. Then I wish you luck.

In the end, this incident was called the Bomber case. Kim Do-shik asked the police who were standing around.

“Fuck. Do you know where this is?”

“I-I'm really sorry...”

“I'm not sure.”

Cho Kang-suk sighed slowly. He knew of a professional at these types of things. Although Kang-suk was reluctant, he was confident in that person's abilities. It seemed like this time as well, he would have to ask that brat for help.

“Inspector. Let's ask Investigator Joo Hyun-ho for advice.”

“Ah, yes. Where is he now!”

“Due to the hippo incident, he was dispatched to Kangdong Police Station.”

“Don’t report everything and call him immediately!”

Joo Hyun-ho arrived where everyone was gathered in exactly three minutes.

He was wearing a trench coat and seemed to have come in a hurry. It was the same style as Detective Columbo, whom he admired. He had run here as fast as he could. It was like watching a high school student going to the athletic field during P.E.

“Hahaha! I am qualified in this case.”

Kang-suk had given a rough overview of the case over the phone in advance. Kim Do-shik’s eyes flashed as he spoke to Hyun-ho.

“Investigator Joo. Just like you got the hippo last time, please solve this case!”

Kim Do-shik’s eyes were full of trust. Joo Hyun-ho scratched his head,

“As I wrote in the report, someone who Kang-suk sunbae and I

don't know was the one who caught the hippo. We just happened to be there."

While he was the type of person who treated investigations as a game, he wasn't the type to claim another person's merits.

"But it is true that you were in the place where the hippo committed the crime and saved the victim. That is good enough."

"Thank you. First, let me focus on this case."

"You two are the best talents in our Kangdong Police Station. I believe in you."

Kang-suk laughed as he was combined with Hyun-ho. Hyun-ho touched his glasses and read the memo containing the clue of the bomb. Then he spoke not even a minute later,

"I solved it. I know where the bomb is placed. Request assistance straight away."

"What, already?"

The riddle almost completely filled the A4 paper. That wasn't quick enough to read everything written there. Yet he had solved it? Kim Do-shik looked at Joo Hyun-ho in disbelief.

Joo Hyun-ho pulled a pen from his pocket, highlighted a few

words and handed it to Kim Do-shik.

“It’s mostly junk information that’s designed to blur what really matters.”

Immediately after that, Kim Do-shik asked for support from SWAT and the special bomb disposal squads.

Then Hyun-ho explained.

“28 devices not connected refers to these words, not the bombs. Do you know what I mean?”

“Ah! [Hunminjeongeum](#)?”

(Hyun-ho is probably referring to the 28 letters of hangul, the Korean alphabet that was created)

“And words are created. In the end, this sentence points to King Sejong. And the next words are bank, learning and Confucian scholar. That means Sungkyunkwan University.”

“Ohh...!”

“The sentence itself is roughly a middle school grade inscription pun. The important thing is that at least three or more words per paragraph point to the same thing.”

“T-That’s right. Then the bomb is hidden at Sungkyunkwan



University? Do you know the exact position?”

The university was incredibly large. In addition, it wasn't in one place but spread across various regions. There was the humanities and social sciences campus of Sungkyunkwan University in Myeongyun-dong, Jongno-gu, Seoul. The natural sciences campus was in Suwon.

If it was the latter, then it would be hard to cope with the problem from Seoul. They needed to know the exact location.

“There is a word in the middle of the sentence ‘the wind blows, the tree blossoms in spring.’ It looks to be pointing to a tree, but it is actually talking about the blue dragon. Among the five attributes, blue means wood, spring and wind. And as a symbol of Sungkyunkwan University’s bank is a blue dragon.”

Kim Do-shik’s eyes widened at Joo Hyun-ho’s tremendous reasoning power. A police officer heard it and asked.

“But isn’t that also referring to Sungkyunkwan University? So there is no change.”

Joo Hyun-ho shook his head.

The blue dragon clearly meant Sungkyunkwan University, but there was something different.

“Of course, we can also see it like that. But to be precise, it is the

symbol of Sungkyunkwan University's bank. There is a legend related to the blue dragon. Therefore, it is considered symbolic to have a blue dragon statue. It is a symbol but isn't a symbol, but that isn't what it means. The place with a blue dragon statue. The bomb will obviously be there."

"W-Where is that?"

"Wait a moment. I don't know everything."

Joo Hyun-ho laughed and pulled out his smartphone to look it up. It took 10 seconds for the information to appear.

"I have sent the exact location to your phone."

Kim Do-shik saw the result of the search on his phone and issued orders in a loud voice.

"Call the Myeongnyun personnel right now! The bomb is in the blue dragon statue at the front gate!"

"Yes, I understand!"

Kang-suk was ready to move. By the way, he couldn't see Joo Hyun-ho, who usually followed him like a puppy.

"Eh? Hyun-ho. You're not following."

Hyun-ho had taken off his coat and was sitting in a corner with the tape recorder.

“Ah, Sunbae. I think I have to take individual action this time. I want to try an analysis of the tape.”

Kang-suk nodded. Unlike himself, who specialized in jumping in, Hyun-ho was an expert in analyzing the opponent. They had to do what they did best.

“I’ll let you know if there is anything else. I’ll call you on your phone.”

“Uh, yes. Please do so.”

The police moved in search of the bomb.

---

“Everybody, please evacuate according to the instructions!”

Hundreds of police officers came to Sungkyunkwan University. There was a frenzy among the university students walking around the school.

“What? What? Evacuation? A-All of a sudden...?”

“Is this some type of army reservist training?”

Then armed police rushed through the hall and told the students.

“It is real. Please evacuate now.”

“Haha... What, is this a war?”

“It is similar. I can’t tell you anything else. Please hurry up!”

“...Yes, I understand.”

No matter how weak the public perception, the dignity of the uniformed police officers was enormous. There was no student who resisted. Although it was a little cluttered, the evacuation was carried out without any problems.

“Now, now, there is no need to shove. Please stand in a row over here.”

The reservists who shone at this time. Using their experience in evacuation training that they received in the army, the reservists took action and led the other students.

Cho Kang-suk sighed with relief as he watched the scene.

“...No students will be damaged. It is fortunate.”

Usually in movies, the people in the area would be evacuated if there was a bomb threat. By the way, an explosion would occur even before the time limit was reached. Did this bomber have some conscience remaining?

Fortunately, due to Joo Hyun-ho's reasoning, there were still 10 minutes until the scheduled explosion. It was enough to deal with the bomb. He hoped that there would be no damage.

At that moment, the SWAT team started approaching the blue dragon statue.

“There is a bomb!”

Kang-suk sighed.

All he had to do was catch the criminal. He would leave the bomb to the professionals.

Kim Do-shik looked at the SWAT team with an expression of trust.

“Can you do it?”

“Yes. We are professionals. Leave it to us.”

When a bomb was found in movies, there were often wires that needed to be cut. However, that was only to increase the tension.

In fact, if a bomb was found, it was to be put in a state where it couldn't explode with liquid nitrogen or shock absorbers, then moved to another place to be handled. That's why they were called the disposal squad, not the disassembly squad.

“Uh, Inspector! This bomb has no primer!”

“What? It is a seedless watermelon?”

“Fuck, again?”

Kim Do-shik spat on the ground.

The bomb installed here was the same as the one delivered to the police station. It was a bomb that had the power to destroy a whole building if it exploded. But the primer had been removed, as if the bomber was teasing them. It seemed like an armed demonstration.

Kim Do-shik approached the SWAT team leader and asked.

“Is there a tape recorder?”

“Please wait a moment. Is there perhaps a tape recorder in the box?”

“Eh? There is!”

The SWAT team leader pointed at the tape recorder that was where the primer should be.

“It is the same as the bomb delivered to the station. It would be best to listen to the contents of the tape recorder at once.”

“Yes. That’s right.”

Kim Do-shik handed it over to Cho Kang-suk.

“Should Detective Cho listen?”

“Oh, you want to listen?”

It was burdensome but everyone knew about Kang-suk’s achievements, so the SWAT team leader gave it up to Kang-suk. The SWAT team leader carefully pressed the switch of the recorder.

-By listening to this message, you have found the safe bomb. Isn’t the tutorial fun?

The people who were listening spat. He mobilized hundreds of police for what? Practice?

-I showed you this much to make you realize that I’m not joking. Then I’ll give you the next mission. This time it is real so you better hurry.

“Fuck...

This wasn't training anymore. Kim Do-shik instructed Kang-suk.

“Tell Joo Hyun-ho to come here right now. Crazy.”

Only Joo Hyun-ho could solve the mystery. They had to do this seven more times? Furthermore, if they were late, then a deadly disaster would occur. The nation's top specialists were gathered here, but tired faces had already emerged.

The sky was almost yellow.

It was at that moment. Kim Do-shik received a phone call.

“Who? It if is a prank call or spam call then I will smash them!”

He roughly pressed the call button and brought the phone to his ear and heard a familiar voice. Unfortunately, it wasn't a spam call or prank call.

-Hello, Inspector Kim Do-shik.

“Y-you...!”

It was the Bomber's voice on the phone!



–You sound pretty surprised... But unfortunately, I’m not the Bomber.

“.....!”

Just then, the person’s voice changed. This time, it was a young woman’s voice.

–Kukukuk. I’m getting goose bumps so I guess I have to use the Bomber’s voice. Don’t judge me by my voice.

There were machines that could change one’s voice, but that usually resulted in an unnatural mechanical sound. The person on the phone wasn’t like that. His voice had definitely changed while speaking. Was the other person a voice actor?

Kim Do-shik gulped and asked.

“This doesn’t seem like a prank call. W-What is going on?”

–I’ll speak briefly. Right now, you... And those who are gathered are in a difficult situation. Oh, can you tell the SWAT team member next to you not to do that?

“...Hup!”

The other person spoke as if he knew the situation going on here.

The even more amazing thing was that he knew the SWAT team leader was listening to the call.

Kim Do-shik started sweating.

-I want to help you. I will cooperate in helping you find the bombs. Of course, it isn't for free like when I caught the hippo.

The hand that was holding the phone trembled. The hippo was a secret that only the police knew about. But this person knew...

“H-Hippo...! Did you catch him?”

-It was my first service. If you are suspicious then I will tell you about the marks that I left behind.

The other person briefly explained how the hippo was arrested, and he knew exactly about everything unusual that occurred. Only a handful of police officers knew that.

“Y-You...”

-I'll tell you where the next bomb will go off. By the way, the next one isn't a seedless watermelon.

“H-How...!”

Kim Do-shik stared at the phone in his hand with surprise. He was a veteran who had been with the police for 30 years. He was familiar with dealing with people.

“Track the one I am on the phone with! He is a key witness in this case!”

“Yes, I understand.”

Then he casually brought the phone to his ear again.

–Ah right, the tracking will become strange so don’t waste your manpower. Don’t you have to worry about labour costs?

“...Hup!”

It was like he installed a listening device here. Kim Do-shik felt fear towards the other person on the phone. He seemed to know everything. Surely he hadn’t planted a spy? But Kim Do-shik trusted everyone here. Besides, none of them had sent a message anywhere.

–The bomber asked for 15 billion. But I am not so greedy. 150 million won per criminal. That is a reasonable price. How about it? Sign a contract with me.

Kim Do-shik’s eyes flashed.

The other person was asking for money in return for catching criminals. Moreover, the amount was only 1/3 of what it cost to move hundreds of SWAT teams. However, he wondered if the person could really catch the Bomber.

-You feel doubtful. It is understandable. I would be the same. Then I will find the next bomb for you. Will you believe me then?

“Y-You... What the hell is your identity?

The voice replied.

-A criminal who catches other criminals. Then-I am called the God of Crime.

Thus, the God of Crime revealed himself to the Korean police.

## Chapter 65 – Bomber #3

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Kim Do-shik was troubled after receiving the call from the unidentified person. The commissioner of the National Police Agency had given him field authority, but the case had grown too big to make a judgment alone.

The SWAT team members also didn't look good. Their abilities were lacking and they needed to get help from an unknown person. The SWAT team leader said with a resolute expression.

“First of all, why don't we try to do as much as we can? Then we can ask for cooperation if we need it.”

Kim Do-shik nodded. Fortunately, this time they had half a day to spare. First, they had to wait for Joo Hyun-ho to arrive.

Shortly afterwards, a BMW arrived at the scene of the incident.

“That person...”

“Yes. Investigator Joo Hyun-ho.”

It was a luxury car that wasn't suitable for the field, but it was a ride that was bought using his own money.

“Ahaha. I'm sorry for the delay.”

“No, it was faster than I thought. Just listen to the tape recorder.”

“Then I’ll solve the riddle right away.”

Numerous people paid attention as Joo Hyun-ho listened to the hint that the Bomber left behind. He was the one who solved the first problem instantly. They thought he could do it again this time. Then they could solve this case without the help of the God of Crime.

Kim Do-shik thought so as he looked at Joo Hyun-ho.

“Kuoong...”

“What is it? Will it take more time? The time for the bomb to go off is still five hours away. Relax.”

“That’s not it...”

Joo Hyun-ho made a difficult expression. It wasn’t that he couldn’t solve the problem, it was just not the answer that he wanted.

Kim Do-shik’s expression became serious. It seemed like Joo Hyun-ho was unable to say the answer.

“He is being a petty jerk.”

“Yes. That’s exactly what it is.”

Joo Hyun-ho sighed and wrote down the answer to the problem on the piece of paper.

[Educational institutions in Seoul.]

“...That is it?”

The scope was too broad. Furthermore, if the bomb went off then the damage to young students would be enormous.

Joo Hyun-ho bit his lip and answered,

“The answer I got is an educational institute. More details are needed but it just leads to an endless loop. The problem itself is literally a trap.”

“Oh my god...”

Joo Hyun-ho was a Mensa member and the owner of a very high IQ. His reasoning was top class among the investigators. That Joo Hyun-ho was saying this.

He was very nervous about the content.

“In the end, a bomb is hidden in one of the many educational institutes in Seoul.”

“This hint can’t be narrowed down further.”

“Are you sure?”

“Yes. King Solomon would say the same thing if he were to be resurrected.”

“...Investigator Joo. Do you know how many educational institutions there are in Seoul?”

Joo Hyun-ho nodded.

“Three years ago, there were a total of 872 kindergartens, 594 elementary schools, 379 middle schools, 317 high schools, 29 special schools and 17 others for a total of 2208. I think we will need at least 20,000 people to search all of them for the bomb.”

“20,000...”

It was an impossible number.

“Even if all the police officers in Seoul were gathered together, it is impossible. In the end, you will need to obtain the cooperation of the private sector. So the presence of the bomb will spread to the mass media.”



“Ohh... That can’t happen!”

Bombs occurring in the middle of the city. If it spread to the media then there would be a huge uproar, and the censure would be tremendous. Kim Do-shik was prepared to take off all his clothes and take responsibility if this case went wrong. He didn’t know it was a situation where he would have to go to the army rather than ending it with the police.

In the end, Kim Do-shik made a firm decision.

“It can’t be helped. No matter how big it gets, the safety of the public is the top priority I will take responsibility. Immediately contact all educational institutions in downtown Seoul and ask them to search for bombs on campus. I also have to make a call to the commissioner. I will do it on my line.”

“Yes, I understand.”

Kim Do-shik picked up his phone to call the commissioner of the NPA. At the same time, someone called him.

“It can’t be...”

When he picked up the call, the person he expected was on the other line.

–It looks like you are asking for help from the police commissioner. As expected of Inspector Kim Do-shik. You will accept full responsibility to protect the people. But I am sorry.

“...What does that mean?”

He didn't have time to think about this person.

–I have already found the bomb. Why don't you go to H High School in K district? Ah right, this is a service. It isn't easy to mobilize 20,000 people. The choice is yours to make.

Then the call cut out.

Kim Do-shik gritted his teeth. He wasn't sure what the other person knew, but if his information was true, then he would get 150 million won. Then they would be able to handle the remaining bombs.

“Detective Cho. Do you want to go to K High School to check if there is really a bomb?”

“Yes, I understand.”

He would soon see if the other person was a fraud or not.

“The Bomber or that bastard. I don't know who is worse. The person doing it, or the one trying to make money from it.”

Kim Do-shik suddenly wanted to smoke a cigarette.

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There really was a bomb.

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“Aigoo...”

Tae-hyuk moaned as he finished the phone call and sat on a bench. He seemed to have overdone it this time. He had been running hard for almost three hours, and now he was completely exhausted.

“Anyways, the one coming to check the bomb is probably Kang-suk hyung. Shouldn’t I finish the preparations before that?”

Just finding the bomb ahead of the police wasn’t enough. He also had to do a lot of work behind the scenes.

“Still, Ha-yang noona is very useful.”

Tae-hyuk found it hard to imagine her as security company employee. However, it was with her help that he could call Kim Do-shik with such confidence. She manipulated the origin of the call every time Tae-hyuk called. It was like putting a swan in water – on the surface, they floated gracefully. However, their feet were

actually moving rapidly in the water.

“My agility has increased, thanks to running around so much.”

In Atlantis, he had to go beyond the limits of his flesh to escape, so his agility had gone up by five. But now when he checked, it had risen by another three.

“I’m already at 33.”

When he thought about it, his agility stat mainly rose when he was with Yoo Ha-yang. Maybe Yoo Ha-yang had something special like An Eun-young’s studying skill?

“Next time I have to find out more.”

That wasn’t all that was available. It was necessary to check everything as the God of Crime.

Tae-hyuk was sitting on a bench in the corner of the playground at H High School, near the school where he caught the voyeur. He was able to blend in naturally because he had the uniform.

“Now. I will finish this.”

There was a large courier box at Tae-hyuk’s feet. Kim Tae-sung’s liquid bomb was hidden inside it. Once the primer was triggered, the two liquids would mix and cause an explosion. However, he

had removed the primer.

“Originally, 20,000 people were mobilized because of this bomb.”

The information spread to the media and caused an uproar around the whole country. It was exactly what the Bomber wanted.

Distract the police and kill his real target.

Why did he become the Bomber when he was an ordinary chemistry teacher? It was clear that Yoo Ha-yang was interested in this.

However, Tae-hyuk’s thoughts were different.

“A bad guy is just bad. All the people I met in prison were heinous criminals.”

All criminals had their circumstances, but it was no excuse. Seo Tae-hyuk had a memorable stay in prison for 10 years, and had met countless criminals there. Therefore, Tae-hyuk believed that criminals were just criminals.

“They are just a good money source.

Tae-hyuk licked his lips and looked at the box containing the bomb. Once the police discovered this, they would have to deal

with him.

He had received a bounty for catching Yoo Cheol-ho. However, he didn't earn that much despite catching some criminals. It was literally a free service. There was no enthusiasm. He didn't want to catch a criminal who didn't have a bounty.

But the police would eventually given Tae-hyuk 150 million to catch the Bomber. A criminal who caught other criminals. Today, the God of Crime appeared in the world for the first time.

“There are still more than 100 people on the blacklist.”

Some of them couldn't be judged by the law such as Park Seong-ho. Some people he couldn't turn over to the police, like Big Mama and Moonlight Flower.

However, there were at least 50 people he could catch with their own crime skills. Depending on the risk, the bounty applied would be between 50 million to 200 million. If he could get them all, then he could receive over five billion won. With that type of money, his family wouldn't need to worry for a lifetime.

“First of all, we can buy a good apartment. Noona can open a small shop. Would Tae-min like an office?”

It was starting now. Until now, he had dealt with the criminals without thinking, but now it was different.

Tae-hyuk laughed. It was important to pursue Park Jung-hwan's whereabouts, but he needed money for the happy future of his family.

It was very deep. The blacklist would make him big money. In order to act while concealing his identity, he thought of the title, the God of Crime.

“Shall I finish this?”

When he checked the time, Kang-suk would be coming soon. Tae-hyuk placed the bomb box on the bench and hung a banner from the tree.

The bomb wouldn't be difficult to find. When they looked at this, the police would cry out the name of the God of Crime, rather than the Bomber.

Tae-hyuk didn't look back and moved to find the next bomb.

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“Keok... This bastard!”

Kim Do-shik gritted his teeth. He could find the bomb at H High School. The other person clearly said that. He had been wondering what it meant, but the person did something cute like this..

“Haha... He is called the God of Crime? I don't know who you are

but you are a delightful person.”

The SWAT team leader muttered. A box containing the bomb was placed in a corner of the school. However, there was a large banner above it.

[Feel free to eat – God of Crime.]

There were three boxes containing ramyun noodles underneath.

Cho Kang-suk said.

“Inspector. I think he brought this for us to eat.”

“Fuck. Then he should have given us hot water as well!”

Kang-suk laughed.

Fortunately, the school gave the police warm water and they could eat warm noodles.

In the meantime, Kim Do-shik finished his conversation with the commissioner. He delivered the contents directly to Cho Kang-suk.

“I have permission. I will appoint Detective Cho as the head of the Special Headquarters for the God of Crime.



“Huh? What do you mean?”

“In the future, I will tell him to speak to you.”

Kim Do-shik handed his phone to Kang-suk. He was the typical boss dumping the unenviable task onto his subordinate.

Kang-suk made a dumbfounded expression at the promotion.

Kim Do-shik added,

“A special budget will be organized.”

Kim Do-shik spoke angrily with a red face.

“Deal with the God of Crime.”

Kang-suk swallowed his saliva. He couldn't decide if this was right or not.

“I don't know if this is really good.”

“But with his help, nobody will get hurt and we can catch the Bomber.”

“Still, the opponent is a criminal.”

“Yes. A criminal who catches other criminals.”

Kang-suk was left holding the phone. In the future, it was his task to deal with the God of Crime.

## Chapter 66 – Bomber #4

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“I’ve been running around Seoul all day...”

Tae-hyuk muttered as he stared at [Samilmun](#).

(TN: A large gate that is the entrance to a park in Korea. Named after the [March 1st Movement](#), one of the earliest displays of resistance during the ruling of Korea by Japan)

The fourth bomb was installed in Tapgol Park, Jongno-gu, Seoul. The hint mentioned a park and the 3.1 movement, so it wasn't too hard to locate. The problem was the rest of the situation. The sun had gone down while he was running hard. Perhaps this would be the last bomb installed today.

“Ah really. Once I make enough money then I should buy a car.”

Then Tae-hyuk scratched his head as he thought of something.

“Ah. That reminds me, I don't even have my license yet.”

Of course, if he needed a license then he could make it with the Counterfeit skill. However, public transportation such as the bus and subway was still comfortable. He was a citizen.

Tae-hyuk recalled the contents of the phone call that he made before. It stated that the contact person had changed to Cho Kang-suk, and that there would be a reward if he cooperated in finding the bombs.

“I didn’t think they would give the money so obediently. Still, it is strange.”

Tae-hyuk licked his lips.

By the way, Cho Kang-suk would be in charge of him, which wasn’t entirely unexpected. It seemed like there was more confidence in him than Tae-hyuk thought. It wasn’t bad for Tae-hyuk if Cho Kang-suk was in a higher position. If he kept stacking up merits like this, wouldn’t it be easy for him to eventually become the commissioner?

“That should be enough for Noona. That reminds me, I have to prepare for their second date.”

He had planned something great for both of them, but it ended up not working. Kang-suk had received a call during the visit to the planetarium and had to go to work while wearing a suit. It was a sad day that allowed them to feel the woes of an ordinary worker.

In the end, Tae-hyuk and Ha-ran went to the luxurious restaurant that was reserved. Ha-ran had enjoyed spending time with her younger brother after a long time. However, Tae-hyuk had to spend 300,000 won for the meal, so he didn’t know if the food would enter his mouth or his nose.

Anyway, Tae-hyuk had decided to produce the second date.

The bomb would be hidden some place to the right after entering through Samilmun. The December evening was so cold that he couldn't prevent the coat even with a thick coat. Therefore, there were barely any people walking in the park. Even if an explosion occurred here, the damage wouldn't be so great.

Tae-hyuk wondered if there were any witnesses around and triggered the Spying skill. He could feel some unseen eyes. He had invested a great deal of affinity points to escape from Atlantis, and now it was possible to check the status and belongings of other people in a wider range.

“Hrmm... There is a cleaner with a broom.”

It felt like observing the surroundings through radar. However, he couldn't use it often due to the serious stamina exhaustion.

“Wait a minute. Cleaner...?”

Tae-hyuk suddenly realized a strange point. He took out his phone and checked the time.

6:30 p.m. It was long past the work hours. Cleaners were people who were sensitive to work hours due to it being an occupation that involved their bodies. But this cleaner was staying up late to work? It was strange.

This was a place where the bomb was installed, further heightening his suspicions.

Tae-hyuk scratched his head.

Originally, the hidden bomb was supposed to be found at H High School around 10 tonight. Tapgol Park was tomorrow at dawn. One of the biggest disadvantages of the liquid bomb was that it didn't perform well as a timer bomb. Therefore, a specially made storage contained was needed to delay freezing as much as possible. But that had a limit of half a day.

‘In other words, Kim Tae-sung predicted the time that the bomb would be found and set up the next bomb.’

He was a man with a very good mind, and had obviously calculated everything when he started this. The search of all schools in Seoul was also an operation to buy time.

But there was something Kim Tae-sung couldn't think of, which was the presence of Seo Tae-hyuk. It was the same as playing a Minesweeper game while knowing the correct answer.

Tae-hyuk arrived at the place where the next bomb would be installed much faster than Kim Tae-sung anticipated. Maybe it wasn't a bomb but the Bomber hunt.

Tae-hyuk laughed.

It saved like he would be giving a present to the police officers suffering in this cold weather.

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“You must have suffered in this cold.”

Tae-hyuk handed a warm can of coffee to the cleaner having a hard time in this cold weather.

“Aigoo. Of course not, it’s my job. Thanks, I really appreciate this.”

The cleaner was a man in his 50s with wrinkles around his eyes, indicating that he smiled a lot. The two men sat down on a bench and looked up at the moon in the sky. The cleaner grabbed the can of coffee with both hands and carefully raised it to his mouth before saying in an excellent voice.

“On nights with a bright moon like this, I think of my daughter.”

“Your daughter likes the moon?”

The cleaner replied with a look that said he was locked in his memories.

“Yes. When my wife had my child, I saw a big moon in my dream. Therefore, I named her Sang-ah (Ivory).”

“Oh, isn’t she the goddess of the moon from Chinese

mythology?”

“Yes, also known as Heng’e. So she really liked the moon. She said she wanted to go there one day. Her dream was to become an astronaut.” (TN: The common name in Chinese mythology is Chang’e)

Tae-hyuk asked a question that was necessary when hearing old stories.

“So what happened?”

The janitor smiled wanly.

“In the end, she went to the moon, along with her mother.”

“So why didn’t you go with them?”

The cleaner made a serious expression and sighed. He was locked in his thoughts. Was he remembering his happy days with his family?

A long time passed. Once the hot can of coffee became cold, the firmly closed mouth finally opened.

“I still have work to do.”



Tae-hyuk gulped down his cold coffee and said with a smile.

“It was nice meeting you, Kim Tae-sung. I’ve heard your story well.”

Kim Tae-sung’s eyes widened. His expression seemed to ask how Tae-hyuk knew his name. Tae-hyuk stepped on the can he was drinking and said.

“I would like to send you to the moon where your daughter is. Well, I don’t have enough ability. At best, I can only show you the stars.”

“Huh? A-All of a sudden...?”

[You have activated the Violence skill.]

-Muscle strength and agility are strengthened.

Tae-hyuk swung the iron pipe made by the Violence skill and hit Kim Tae-sung’s head.

“Keok...!”

Kim Tae-sung collapsed at the unexpected attack.

“Ouch... I thought I would die from the cold. Why was the introduction so long?”

Tae-hyuk checked the status of Kim Tae-sung who was collapsed on the bench. He controlled his power but it seemed like Kim Tae-sung would be out for a while. Perhaps it would be a few hours before he opened his eyes.

“Once he wakes up, he will be panicked to see a strange ceiling.”

Tae-hyuk took off the glasses he was wearing. He also tore off the beard that he had put on his chin. It was a disguise but he looked quite funny.

Tae-hyuk also covered his head with a beanie so he wouldn't leave any traces behind. Then he took out surgical gloves. Once everything was ready, Tae-hyuk started to check Kim Tae-sung's belongings.

“Oh, the tape recorder is found.”

The recorded tape was in the pocket of the clothes. The content was a riddle about the location of the next bomb, which was found in a garbage-carrying cart. The effect of the intimidation would fall if he didn't back it up.

“...Indeed, there is also a primer this time.”

Tae-hyuk smiled bitterly after confirming that his memories

were correct. Tae-hyuk tied up Kim Tae-sung's body after attaching the evidence with gum tape.

“It is cold outside, so you might catch a cold. I'll have someone come pick you up quickly.”

In the end, the bomber Kim Tae-sung had made the whole country move for 120 hours with his bombs. Tae-hyuk had stopped him after 20 hours.

Tae-hyuk pulled out Yoo Ha-yang's phone from his pocket, which allowed him to make calls without having his position traced. Of course, she had to be a night owl for that to happen.

“I'm sorry, but this time the criminal is caught so it is a happy ending! ...Please do this.”

Kim Tae-sung could be called a material to be traded. Until now, Tae-hyuk was only concerned about catching criminals.

Then he could get new skills or affinity points. However, even though he met new criminals after the hippo case, he didn't get their skills. The reason was probably Tae-hyuk's low rating.

If so, he needed to at least make money. Tae-hyuk saw a serious deficit from the Death Circus case.

‘Ohh... I once had three billion won in my hands.’

Of course, it was nothing. Even if he came out of the Death Circus with it, Choi Sung-yeol wouldn't have paid him any money. It was a bourgeois game played with fake money.

But now it was different. He now had a route to get money. From now on, he had to move really carefully.

“Then shall I finish this Bomber case?”

The police were trying to catch the Bomber. However, they had no idea that Tae-hyuk had already caught him.

Tae-hyuk made called Kim Do-shik's phone. But it would probably be Cho Kang-suk who picked up.

‘It feels strange to deceive Hyung. Hyung, please excuse me for Noona's sake.’

Then the call was connected.

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The call arrived. Joo Hyun-ho was filled with embarrassment.

“Uhh, has he solved the problem already? Damn! What? What the hell is going on in that head?”

He had been reading all types of history books for an hour, starting with Romance of the Three Kingdoms. It was to solve the riddle left behind by the Bomber. He knew the outline to a certain extent so he could get the answer in 10 minutes. But the God of Crime had called. Joo Hyun-ho kicked the ground.

Cho Kang-suk was in charge of contact with the God of Crime. He was speaking with a serious expression. Once the call ended, Kim Do-shik asked.

“Detective Cho! What did you find out? Did he tell you where the next bomb is?”

Cho Kang-suk made a difficult expression.

“That... It isn’t it. He didn’t find the bomb.”

“Aigoo. Then what? He called because he was bored?”

Joo Hyun-ho, who had been listening to the conversation between Kim Do-shik and Cho Kang-suk, jumped in.

“Haha! I thought so. This problem isn’t easily solved! Please wait a moment. I will definitely solve the problem faster than the God of Crime!”

Cho Kang-suk burst out laughing.

“That... He found the Bomber, not the bomb.”

“Eh?”

“Ehh?”

The people who heard him shrieked.

“What? Really?”

“Yes. He really called about that. The Bomber is caught.”

“W-Where?”

“Tapgol Park.”

Joo Hyun-ho shrieked.

“Ah! 3.1, March 1st movement! Damn... Why didn't I think of that before?”

Cho Kang-suk and Kim Do-shik ignored Joo Hyun-ho, who was running around with an upset expression.

“Then what are you going to do? Will you really give him money?”

“If he really caught the Bomber then yes. It is a promise.”

“150 million...”

“But I still can’t deny that the Bomber and God of Crime might be accomplices. So I’d like to hold both of them. Therefore, I put a mini transmitter in the money bag. The National Intelligence Service is assisting.”

Cho Kang-suk’s eyes widened.

“Are you going to catch the God of Crime?”

“Yes. Then I will see what tricks he used. Detective Cho, aren’t you curious?”

Kim Do-shik’s eyes flashed.

His senses, developed from over 30 years as a police officer, told him something. They told him that the Bomber was nothing compared to the God of Crime.

# Chapter 67 – Bomber #5

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The police SWAT team moved to arrest the Bomber, as they couldn't idly sit by as the culprit was knocked out by an unknown person. The SWAT transport van arrived.

“The destination is Tapgol Park!”

“There is a possibility that the culprit is armed, so be careful!”

The SWAT team checked their equipment at their leader's command.

Safety goggles, kevlar vests and helmets, tactical vests, and operational clothing. They also held German made MP5 submachine guns and the P7 pistol, which would make it hard for ordinary people to run normally.

Even so, the crew's movements were quick. They were the elite counter-terrorist unit under the Korean National Police Agency, the Special Weapons and Tactics Team, abbreviated as the KNP SWAT Team. This group started moving to deal with the criminal.

The citizens took out their smartphones and took photos of the SWAT team. Their atmosphere was different from when protests were taking place in Seoul.

“Isn't that the special forces?”



“Wah! They are on a completely different level.”

“Did an act of terrorism happen?”

As soon as the special troops arrived at the entrance to Tapgol Park, they secured the border and entered the area. Fortunately, the citizens inside were all able to be evacuated safely. The police had arrived in advance and were blocking people from entering.

However, they couldn't take away the smartphones. Therefore, the fact that something was happening spread through the country thanks to SNS. The media was controlled to prevent confusion, but individuals putting up shots couldn't be avoided.

The leader moved at a rapid pace with his team following behind him. A homemade bomb had enough power to blow up a building. There was a sense of tension in the movements of the troops. However, they had gone through high intensity training and were mentally prepared for moments like this.

There were no obstacles during their advance. They arrived at the place where the Bomber was in a flash.

“Ah! A person!”

The team leader looked at the Bomber from a distance. Then he muttered.

“Crazy. He is all packed up and easy to take.”

The leader's mouth twitched as he saw the bomb in the cart.

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Thus, the Bomber ended up being arrested like this, but the storm after that was enormous. What was the relationship between the explosion at Atlantis and the special troops?

A tremendous amount of opinions started to pour in from the netizens. Most people saw it as a serial bomber. In the end, the voices demanding the truth from the government grew more and more.

The police commissioner felt like pulling his hair out. As the commissioner of the NPA was getting a headache, he received a call from a subordinate. They were asking what to do with the unidentified criminal who played a crucial role in resolving the Bomber case. The commissioner of the NPA replied nervously,

“This guy. Don't report everything. Just take care of it! You have done it once or twice already.”

Right now, the commissioner's concern was the Death Circus case, not the Bomber. Tiwai International wasn't a problem. The important thing was that too many VIPs watched the murder variety show that was created.

“Kuoong. I need to at least save this friend, Chairman Song.”

It was nice to hear that the hospital incident was still settled, but things kept popping up.

“Atlantis created by the Taesung Group was bombed... How did Chairman Song handle this?”

If the connection between large corporations and high ranking police officers was revealed, his position would be in danger. Maybe he should reveal a few showbiz scandals prepared in advance to divert the attention of the people. The NPA commissioner issued emergency orders to gather the chiefs of each broadcasting station.

Just as he was organizing these incidents, someone called him.

“Ah, this person. Calling daily...”

But this time, it was someone else.

–C-Commissioner... It is serious. The contents of the breaking news broadcasted by JC...

The commissioner heard his subordinate’s words and rushed to his TV to confirm the breaking news. It was a report about how the terrorist bombings occurred in order to retaliate against the Taesung Group.

Taesung Group had been secretly developing a virus for use as a biological weapon, but it was leaked and dozens were killed. That

incident was concealed and reported as a nitrogen gas leak. At first, there were many people who boycotted the large company. But within a few months, the sales had recovered as before.

There was a man who tried to tell the truth. It was a researcher who felt remorse at seeing colleagues dying from his work. However, his declaration of conscience wasn't revealed at all. Taesung Group had ties to senior police officers. In the end, one person could do nothing in front of the tremendous power of a large company.

Taesung Group infected his family with the virus to stop him from talking. Whether it was a side effect or a variant, they died within a month of infection. In the end, the man disappeared and it had been a year since.

The police commissioner had cleared the incident from his mind. He never thought he would look at it again. His body started shaking.

The director of JC Broadcasting...

“That bastard!”

The commissioner of the NPA called the director of JC. Then a frightened voice was heard, as if the director had been expecting him.

–C-Commissioner... No. We didn't do it.

“What?”

-W-We were hacked. The broadcast right now is a pirate broadcast...

“S-Stop the transmission right now!”

-T...That... If we stop the broadcast then they threatened to blow up the station like Atlantis...

The NPA commissioner watched the screen with a blank expression. At that moment, the names of the people involved in this case appeared. It included Song Won-jin, the chairman of Taesung Group as well as the police commissioner himself.

“It’s over...”

The purpose of the Bomber. It was to hide one target among nine.

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The undercover police officers didn’t know anything about the storm that was blowing among the high-ranking police officers.

-Aim for the moment when the God of Crime takes the money!

150 million won filled a bag. The weight was heavy.

The God of Crime demanded cash that didn't have consecutive serial numbers. The Bomber had been arrested, but the remaining four bombs couldn't be found. Then contact arrived from the God of Crime. Once he received the money safely, the remaining bombs would be handed over.

Kim Do-shik's eyebrows twitched at the words.

"He truly is a criminal!"

In the end, after the Bomber was arrested, a plan was launched in order to capture the God of Crime. It was just before the money would be handed over.

The agent carrying the money asked,

"Supervisor. Do I really just wait here?"

For security reasons, they called their bosses 'supervisor' or 'manager.' Right now, the agent was standing at Exit 1 of Gangnam Station. It was a place where hundreds of people passed by in a single minute.

This place was the location of the trade. The opponent was a fairly bold criminal.

–Yes. There are officers and armed special forces nearby. You just need to wait. An exact time wasn't specified so wait until the person contacts you.

The agent took off the sunglasses he was wearing. He looked around and saw many men with sharp eyes. Numerous people were staring at the bag he was holding. If the other person could take it then he really was a god.

Duk!

The position where the agent stood was just before the entrance. Therefore, the people passing by constantly bumped into him. On the road, there were clothing stores and phone stores. Without a doubt, it was the best place for an ambush. Why did the opponent ask to meet in a place like this? It seemed like he wanted to be caught.

Kim Do-shik contacted the agent.

-Officer Park. Can you check the inside of the bag?

“Huh? The money is safe...”

-Check it yourself!

“.....”

The agent pulled open the bag and briefly checked inside. There were many people nearby, excluding those who were undercover. He couldn't show them a bunch of bills...

“Ack...!”

The agent couldn't help screaming.

The treasured bag he was hugging was empty. There was nothing left except for the transmitter hidden in a corner.

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“H-He really is the God of Crime...”

Kim Do-shik said with a bemused expression.

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“Urgggh... Hungry...”

Tae-hyuk yawned as he sat on the couch and poured water into his cup noodles. He had been running around all day so this was his first chance to eat properly.

Ha-ran, who always waited for Tae-hyuk to return home, had entered her dormitory at the private cram school last week, and would only return home on the weekends.



“It is really good but it is hard to wait for three minutes.”

Tae-hyuk muttered as he broke apart the paired chopsticks.

“Ah right, shouldn’t I cover the lid?”

He looked around, but there was nothing to press on top of the lid.

There was a book he borrowed from An Eun-young, but she would be angry if there was any liquid on it. Tae-hyuk was her student for the next month. He didn’t want to go against her because he needed her help.

“Well, it is a bit big but I’ll use it.”

Tae-hyuk took the liquid bomb on the table and placed it on the lid of the noodles. It was a bit heavy but the noodles would turn out well. He laughed at that thought.

The police tried to catch him. Then he couldn’t give this to them easily.

“Uh... There are still two minutes left. Shall I watch TV? Then the remote...”

The remote control was a master of stealth, it was hard to find once it ran away. At the end of a search operation, he was able to

arrest the culprit that was hiding between the seats of the couch.

The ramyun noodles smelled delicious. Tae-hyuk picked up his chopsticks and placed the noodles into his mouth, and then he took a sip of the broth.

“Kuah! Kill!”

He couldn't help letting out a sound of admiration once it entered his cold and hungry body. Breaking news was now being aired on TV.

–Today, the first trial against Chairman Song Won-jin of the Taesung Group is being held. The prosecutors have charged him with assault, killing a teacher and malpractice. The next breaking news. The National Police Agency...

The screen showed Chairman Song Won-jin handcuffed and with a bowed head. Next to him was a face familiar to Tae-hyuk.

It had been a long time so it seemed like a reunion. Tae-hyuk slurped the delicious noodles with relish. There were also leftovers in the fridge. If he didn't eat it then it would go mouldy.

“By the way, I think I forgot something...”

Tae-hyuk scratched his head and laughed.

# Chapter 68 – DATE HARD 2.0 #1

---

Winter vacation was coming up next week so the inside of the classroom was loud.

On December 23, there would be a short break for two weeks. Once the new year began, students would start earnestly entering hardcore exam mode for university admissions.

Seo Tae-hyuk sat at a window seat and stared blankly in the air, looking at the Demon Revealing Mirror. The Bomber had given him 50 affinity points.

‘Doesn’t it seem like an awfully long time since I last came to school?’

Due to so many incidents occurring, he had been skipping school for almost 10 days straight. If it was the same as before, then he would be forced to see the student adviser. However, some time ago, Seo Tae-hyuk was ranked fourth in the school due to the final examinations.

There was no reason to talk to him, and the only one who didn’t change their attitude was Jung Nam-ho, his homeroom teacher.

“Hey! Tae-hyuk! You weren’t in school for a week. What have you been doing?”

He seemed really concerned. Tae-hyuk scratched his head and

replied,

“I couldn’t concentrate on studying so I went to the temple to pray.”

“Such words are coming from your mouth. Is the sun rising in the west?”

Tae-hyuk pulled out a mock exam score card. All of the subjects on there were rated first class.

“Hmm... What is this? This is great!”

Jung Nam-ho ruffled Tae-hyuk’s hair with an impressed expression. His score was a result of steadily receiving the help of An Eun-young’s studying skill and possessing an intelligence of around 50 points.

‘Criminals should have a good mind.’

The increase in stats didn’t simply indicate a change in numbers. More ideas popped up when he needed it.

Seo Tae-hyuk was completely different from when he caught Yoo Cheol-ho. It wasn’t just his crime skills increasing.

Sometimes it was eerie thinking about it.

“Well, have a good winter vacation. I will consult with you at the beginning of school.”

Tae-hyuk would be a third year in two weeks. It was the time to study in order to enter a good university.

However, there was a limit to acting as a student. First of all, his top priority was to change the future and to catch criminals in order to make money.

‘The course...’

In the future he remembered, he didn’t go to university. As soon as he graduated from high school, he became a part time worker for a staffing company and worked as a guard. Going to university meant that he would have a completely different future.

‘I should go on a tour of the universities with Class President.’

What course department should he enter? He decided to slowly decide.

After Jung Nam-ho’s words, there were five minutes left before classes started.

In the meantime, An Eun-young carefully spoke from where she was sitting beside him. Of course, it wasn’t because she was afraid of Tae-hyuk; she was simply ashamed.

“These days, there are many bullies near our school.”

“Eh? Really?”

Tae-hyuk’s eyes widened as he looked at An Eun-young. This topic came out from Class President’s mouth. Shouldn’t she be more concerned about textbooks rather than gossiping?

“They were originally a bad group that operated outside of Seoul. There seemed to be a crackdown in that area so they moved their activities to this side. A few students of our school have already lost money.”

“Bad group?”

“Nuclear Bomb is their name and the scale is quite large.”

As the class leader, An Eun-young felt anxious about her classmates.

“They are quite famous if Class President knows about it.’

“Uh, yes... You should be careful.”

Tae-hyuk made a bitter expression,

“Why are you telling me to be careful?”

“What? You shouldn’t go to dangerous places.”

He spoke out as a joke but An Eun-young looked serious. Tae-hyuk inwardly sighed.

“Okay. I understand, Class President. I won’t go anywhere dangerous.”

A small smile appeared on An Eun-young’s face and she muttered in a small voice so that Tae-hyuk couldn’t hear,

“...If you do something dangerous, then you’ll get hurt, and we won’t be able to go to university together.”

“Huh? What did you say?”

“Ah, nothing.”

An Eun-young noticed Tae-hyuk’s body condition. It seemed like it wasn’t good lately. She thought about inviting him to her house for a good meal. She still hadn’t been able to reward him for helping her unni. It had been a long time since the two of them...

At that moment, An Eun-young shyly shook her head.

“Ah right. Tae-hyuk. Do you have any plans for the vacation?”

As the saying went, she leapt straight into the fire. The day she was talking about was Christmas Eve. If there was time then studying at home like they did before...

“Uh, I have a date that night.”

“D-Date?”

An Eun-young’s voice shook. Who was Tae-hyuk dating?

“Ah, Class President doesn’t know. On that day, my Noona has a date. I thought I’d give her some support.”

“Uh, really? Ha-ran unni?”

“Their first date was a complete mess, so I thought about helping her this time. I call it Date Hard 2.0!”

An Eun-young was nervous about Tae-hyuk’s naming sense, which seemed to be from 10 years in the past.

“So you will be busy that day. Ah, that’s right. Then I will make you a schedule for studying next year. I’ll make some good and delicious food for you.”



“Um. Yes.”

Tae-hyuk didn't know how much his future would change in one year. Meanwhile, he didn't notice that An Eun-young was looking at him every five minutes.

---

Tae-hyuk headed to a construction site after school. Due to the situation of the adults, it had been neglected for almost a year.

“I think the performance is getting better.”

This was the place that Tae-hyuk went to in order to practice his crime skills. It was steadily rising, but since he hadn't learnt any new skills ever since the hippo incident, he needed to make sure that he could perfectly use the skills he already had.

After his Spying skill was strengthened, it was possible to project the Demon Revealing Mirror into the air, so he didn't need to take the mirror out of his pocket anymore. The time required to activate the skill was also greatly reduced.

He also used Robbery to take all the money from the bag that the police officer was carrying. It was a perfect robbery that wasn't even detected by the sharp reflexes of the people trained to be sensitive to that type of thing. It took a lot of practice to steal that fast, but the result was satisfactory.

‘I was able to steal 150 million won without anyone seeing.’

Now it was possible to use the Robbery skill as naturally as flowing water. The next thing to do was practice the Violence skill. Once he used it, he held an incredibly hard iron pipe, and also temporarily increased his physical strength and agility. However, the Violence skill quickly consumed his stamina.

Of course, it wasn't just the skill that increased his physical strength. He needed to practice constantly for a long time. He mainly used bags filled with sand. However, if someone saw him using a weapon then he would be arrested immediately, which was why he had to intentionally go to places without any people to practice.

‘Eh?’

However, strange sounds started echoing in Tae-hyuk's secret hideaway. He heard somebody's voice.

“Huh? So what? Give me your money.”

“I-I don't h...”

“Are you going to make me look for it? Take it out quickly.”

“R-Really...”

“Ah. This son of a bitch! I feel like hitting you. Do you want your

eyes to be crushed?”

Tae-hyuk coughed at that moment. His hideout had a few gangsters roaming around.

‘Eh? That is my school uniform? I’ve never seen that face before. A freshman?’

Jjak!

At that time, one of the man slapped the boy’s cheek. The boy held his red cheek and screamed,

“I-I was wrong. I-I really don’t have money. I’ll go home and bring it to you. Yes? Please.”

“This bastard. He wants to go to hell.”

Bam!

One of the thugs kicked the boy’s thighs with his combat boots. The boy screamed and fell on the ground.

“Fuck. Do we look like young kids roaming around? My Hyung-nim is in Nuclear Bomb. Take care of this son of a bitch.”

“Aaaagh!”

The gangsters pushed the boy into a corner and started to step on him.

Tae-hyuk frowned. It seemed a bit too much if they simply wanted money.

‘I guess they haven’t joined a gang yet.’

In order to join such places, they needed to prove their manliness, and what they were doing now was also a part of it.

‘Well, I should leave and report this to the police.’

Although it was a bit intense, it wasn’t enough for the boy to lose his life. Recently, Tae-hyuk had seen many heinous crimes.

Maybe that was why... This type of thing seemed like kids playing around.

“Eh? Who the fuck is that?”

The gangsters noticed that there was an uninvited guest.

“Aigoo. Busted.”

Tae-hyuk clicked his tongue and approached the gangsters. One

person, who seemed to be the leader, frowned at Tae-hyuk. The veins in his neck started pulsing.

“Hey, you son of a bitch. Did you call a friend? Huh? Tell me, who is this?”

The leader kicked the abdomen of the boy on the ground. It was like wind emerging from a balloon.

“Keook...!”

The boy gave a pained moan.

“Aigoo. You should be careful. If you hit the wrong place then his intestines might burst. Even if you are a minor... Eh? How old are you? Are you a minor?”

“Fuck, what is this bastard saying?”

The gangsters were upset at Tae-hyuk's mocking tone and instantly surrounded him. Tae-hyuk scratched his head and replied,

“...Aigoo. Sorry Eun-young. I won't be able to keep my promise.”

“Sorry, today is your memorial service.”

The leader gave instructions to his men. They were good in a 1 on 1 fight, but they were confident in their numbers.

Peok!

At that moment, a blunt sound resonated throughout the building. Tae-hyuk suddenly held a large iron pipe in his hands, and swung it at one of the gangsters.

“.....”

The guy couldn't even scream before he collapsed. It was a ridiculous power.

“T-This bastard...!”

The leader was dismayed. The opponent clearly hadn't been carrying anything. Then where did he get such a devastating weapon? In addition, he was familiar with assaulting people with an iron pipe.

The gangsters got goose bumps. They realized that Tae-hyuk's eyes were like a hyena's. However, they had the tenacity of gangsters. The leader pulled out a knife.

“I will kill you...!”

“Aigoo. You are holding the knife like a sword. Do you watch a

lot of movies? By the way, you can never beat an opponent with a longer reach than you.”

Tae-hyuk narrowed the distance at once and aimed his iron pipe at the leader’s arm.

“Keooooook!”

The leader’s arm twisted in a strange direction. From then on, it was a one-sided battle.

Tae-hyuk had won the battle against Han Sang-won, who had specialized in knives. The power of the iron pipe and the Violence skill was enormous. He could even win if he took on half a dozen neighbourhood thugs.

“Well, a 17 on 1 is still impossible.’

Tae-hyuk rummaged through the pockets of the gangsters on the ground. Folded bills emerged, most of them taken from nearby students. They had gathered almost 500,000 won.

Tae-hyuk put one third of it into the pocket of the male student to pay for his medical expenses. Of course, he took the rest as his share. Tae-hyuk stuffed the bills into his pocket and muttered.

“This is better than a part time job. By the way, should I call the police and maybe the ambulance? By the way, I think it is best to fight against others using the Violence skill.”

There was a different feeling than when he hit the sandbags. He was often bored so this wouldn't be too bad as a part-time job.

“The bad group is called Nuclear Bomb?”

He had a feeling he would continue to engage with them in the future.



## Chapter 69 – DATE HARD 2.0 #2

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Seo Ha-ran returned home on the weekend. She ran over without gloves, so her hands were red. Every time she opened her mouth, a white plume of steamy breath billowed out.

She opened the front door and trembled,

“Tae-hyuk, s-sorry. Is Noona late? Are you hungry? I’ll cook you delicious food at once!”

Ha-ran took off her coat and ran to the kitchen, but there was an unexpected scene awaiting her. Her younger brother was cooking in the kitchen.

“Eh? Noona came? It’s cold out, so sit down and rest. You’ve been studying for a long time so I will prepare dinner tonight.”

“Oh my...”

An apron-clad Tae-hyuk carried food to the table. At first glance, there were many things that looked delicious.

Ha-ran looked at Tae-hyuk with an impressed expression.

“It will only take another 10 minutes. Before that, warm up your body. There is hot water in the bathroom.”

“Yes, yes. I came home. My Tae-hyuk is all grown up.”

“Aigoo. Ms. Go in and wash your body.”

Ha-ran picked clothes from her room and entered the bathroom. The hot water came out, even in the winter.

In their old room in the basement, the boiler would be frozen, if it was only slightly cold outside. In the end, she had to boil water with a portable burner for her younger brothers and clean with lukewarm water. She also had a brief shower with freezing cold water. It was cold enough in winter to make her stunned.

Her eyes turned red as she remembered those times. A smile came to her face as she bathed in warm water.

“Now, shall I see how good my little brother is?”

There were a variety of dishes on the table, such as steak and salad. There were also California rolls that looked appetizing. They were all Ha-ran’s favorite foods. However, these things were expensive and not easily eaten.

“W-Wah. Tae-hyuk prepared all of this?”

“In fact, a friend helped me.”

“Girlfriend?”

“No, we just study together.”

“Ahum. I see. You should bring some back for them.”

In fact, An Eun-young had prepared most of these dishes. Tae-hyuk only cut the cabbage, roasted the meat in the oven, and placed it in bowls.

“I don’t know if this will suit Chef Seo Ha-ran, but let’s eat.”

“Yes. But I can’t eat so much.”

“I will wrap the leftovers and give it to Tae-min.”

“Tae-min still hasn’t finished?”

“He won’t be done until 10 p.m.”

Tae-hyuk and Ha-ran chatted as they started to eat.

Ha-ran sliced the steak and was pleasantly surprised. The knife smoothly sunk into the meat, as if she was cutting through tofu. She could feel that the meat was of the finest quality. The red flesh and white fat layer were in perfect harmony. The steak looked so delicious that saliva filled her mouth.

Ha-ran asked gently.

“This seems very expensive...”

Tae-hyuk didn't slice the meat. He just tore it with his mouth and spoke while chewing.

“Ah, the local butcher store was having a sale. It wasn't that expensive so feel free to eat.

Of course, it was an absolute lie.

The identity of the meat was Kobe beef, one of the top three wagyu in Japan. It was also the most expensive Chateau brand. It was a dish that boasted a price of over 100,000 won per person, even if it was just the cheap lunch menu.

Ha-ran cut it into small pieces and raised it to her mouth without knowing it was such an expensive meat.

“W-Wah... So delicious...!”

The rich juices ran down her chin as Ha-ran started to energetically eat the steak.

Next, her fork headed towards the salmon salad. Ha-ran was baffled. There were unidentified black things sprinkled into the salad. When she looked closely, they seemed to be fish eggs.

“Huh? What type of fish egg is that?”

“I got it in a 1+1 sale at the mart. It is delicious when eaten with salmon.”

“I see.”

She didn't know that the fish eggs were caviar, one of the three great delicacies that caught the taste of gourmets all around the world. Just seven ounces of it were sold for an exorbitant price of over \$500. That precious food was now being eaten with salmon salad.

“Although it is a little salty... It is unbelievably delicious, and completely changes the flavor of the salmon.”

Ha-ran made a sound of admiration with every bite of food.

“It is okay. There is still a lot left so we can eat it with some rice tomorrow morning.”

“These ingredients seem expensive...”

“Aish. They are cheap.”

Ha-ran's eyes narrowed and she sent him a suspicious glance. Tae-hyuk just smiled like he didn't know anything. It had been a

long time since he last met his sister, so he wanted to give her the best foods. The two people faced each other and smiled brightly.

“At any rate, Noona can just study hard and not worry about money.”

“That sounds like something I used to say.”

Ha-ran twisted her brother's face.

Tae-hyuk once again swore to himself after seeing his sister smiling so brightly. He wouldn't make his sister unhappy unlike the previous life.

This was the only favor that Tae-hyuk could do for her.

“Ah right. Kang-suk hyung says to expect a date. He is preparing.”

“Omo. Kang-suk?”

“Yes. I'm sure it will be the best date.”

Ha-ran blinked.

She didn't show it on the outside, but it seemed like she was expected a lot.

‘The concept of this date isn’t Beauty and the Beast, but Cinderella...! The problem is whether Kang-suk hyung can do this properly. If it was Beauty and the Beast then he could do well as the beast.’

The actors were ready, but he was worried about how well Cho Kang-suk could do.

---

At the same time.

In the base of the Nuclear Bomb, the second ranked Kang Han-seong stared at his juniors with cold eyes.

“Hyung-nim helped you... It wasn’t for you to look like this.”

His position in the circle wasn’t low. Rather, his charisma and strong power made him one of the high ranking members. The only thing he was lacking in was his amount of contacts.

Therefore, Kang Han-seong desperately tried to increase the number of his followers. If he added just five more people, then he could become a captain of Nuclear Bomb. He had no intention of being underneath someone in a gang. He planned to grow it as much as possible and turn it into an organization.

Of course, he would do his job, but once he was recognized, he

would be able to relax from a high position. The juniors he gathered were his footholds to success.

But what were these pathetic brats? In order to join the group, they had to be able to take money and then hand the money over. They roamed around this area for that reason.

“So... You were beaten up by one person?”

Kang Han-seong caught the eye of a nearby junior, who had one arm in a cast. He couldn't go to the toilet alone.

The sight was enough to make Kang Han-seong sigh.

His juniors bowed their heads.

“I-I'm really sorry. I-If that bastard didn't have the iron pipe then... He is a cowardly bastard.”

Kang Han-seong struck the cheek of his pathetic junior.

“Keok!”

“Hey, you jerk. Is that something to be proud of? Aigoo. I can't believe I invested in scum like this...”

“H-Hyung-nim!”



The juniors clung to Kang Han-seong and bowed. No matter how pathetic, they were still people who followed him. In the end, Kang Han-seong's heart weakened.

"I understand, you brats. This strong Kang Han-seong will solve it."

"T-Thank you. I swear allegiance to Hyung-nim."

"I'm getting goosebumps. Stop before you make me sick. Yes, he was wearing the uniform of A High School?"

"Yes, that's right. It is a school in the area. I am sure he goes to that school."

"Hrmm."

A High School was a famous school nearby, not necessarily as a prestigious school, but for the second generation of good families attending it. Therefore, it had an ambiguous position.

In the end, their money entered the wallets of this gang. However, if the school had a good fighter, then he should check it out. Once they met, Kang Han-seong would see about bringing him into Nuclear Bomb. Even if he did have an iron pipe, he had fought four people alone.

“He might not be a good guy. So let’s act in moderation and go to A High School.”

“H-Hyung-nim, then we...’

“Shit. I’m not your mother. Handle this yourself. Wipe your feet and go home and sleep.”

“Yes, I understand. Thank you, Hyung-nim.”

Kang Han-seong sighed and started to investigate A High School.

---

-Oh, it must be Seo Tae-hyuk. But he isn’t 1st in the school. He did a test a while ago and was ranked 2nd.

-Ah, is that so? Then who is 1st?

-That... An Eun-young. She is completely crazy (about studying).

-Hah. That female is good (at fighting)?

-Completely brilliant. Seo Tae-hyuk is her apprentice. He can’t even compete with An Eun-young.

“.....”

“...H-Hyung-nim! I-I’m really sorry. It really was like this.”

Kang Han-seong glared at his henchmen.

“There is someone bigger than him? In addition, a woman?”

“Yes, that’s right.”

“Huhu, I see. I guess I have to believe what you are saying. What type of person is she?”

“I-I don’t know.”

Kang Han-seong imagined Arnold Schwarzenegger with long hair. At that moment, his palms became damp.

“Ah, I guess I should take a look for myself.”

It seemed like it would become a mess if he left the job to his henchmen. In the end, Kang Han-seong decided to go himself.

“So, where is that person called Tae-hyuk now?”

“T-That...”

A henchman stuttered. He was hesitant about something.

Kang Han-seong muttered with annoyance.

“I told you to know for sure!”

“Ah, no. I know.”

“Really? Where?”

“I heard he is at a restaurant cafe in the suburbs right now.”

It was a restaurant popular with couples.

Kang Han-seong was currently sitting in a factory where the heat wasn't working properly and he was surrounded with the smell of stinky men.

What, a date?

Kang Han-seong's lips twitched. The suburbs were usually deserted, and thus, it wouldn't be a problem if he wanted to beat someone up.

“He is playing very wildly on Christmas Eve. Are 10 people available right now? We have to take care of that bastard, even if we get in trouble.”

Kang Han-seong chuckled.

They were still minors, so they wouldn't be punished properly, even if they damaged the restaurant. The laws protected them.

Then he would punish that bastard who ridiculed four of his men.

“It is me. Gather immediately. From now on, we will start a war.”

Kang Han-seong mobilized all the strong people.

---

“H-How is it?”

Kang-suk asked nervously as he gazed at the suit that was tailored to his body.

Tae-hyuk raised a thumb.

“Wah... You look really cool. It is like a drama.”

The custom made Oxford suit with a expensive price of three million won transformed the bear.

“Really? But this clings to my body too much. If a criminal suddenly appeared...”

“Aigoo. Kang-suk hyung! You should only think about dating today!”

“I understand.”

Cho Kang-suk smiled as he placed a handkerchief in his pocket.

“At any rate, the booked limousine will soon come. Then you will go pick up Noona.”

“T-Tae-hyuk...”

Kang-suk’s eyes turned red.

He thought of the bleak days where he just caught criminals. He never once had a date, yet Tae-hyuk had prepared everything perfectly.

He really was the best brother. Tae-hyuk prepared everything: His clothes, his transportation, and even his reservation at the restaurant. He made Kang-suk practice all of the scripts until he memorized them completely.

“Hyung. I’ll be watching from afar. Don’t tremble. Have a good

time with Noona.”

The two men gazed at each other warmly. Soon, a gorgeous limo arrived in front of them. Now he would go and meet the princess.

Tae-hyuk smiled as Kang-suk went to pick up Ha-ran.

“Nevertheless, doesn’t a prince need a villain?”

Tae-hyuk knew that the gang he just met were looking for him so he had deliberately leaked information and even bribed people to spread rumors for the past three days. In the end, there was going to be a fight today. Indeed, Kang-suk was the best when catching criminals. Furthermore, what if he fought to defend the princess?

A wonderful scene from a fairy tale would come out. The actors were gathering without knowing they were being used.

“Then it will be the best date.”

## Chapter 70 – DATE HARD 2.0 #3

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The restaurant cafe, Ludwig, was a so-called hidden attraction.

By default, it was a live cafe where people could eat while simultaneously listening to music. The high quality performances and delicious food meant that it was one of the most popular dating venues among couples.

The owner's taste meant that there were fairly high quality music equipment. Amateur bands and folk singers came in overwhelming numbers with a desire to perform.

Right now, there was only one couple present. Cho Kang-suk and Seo Ha-ran were sitting down and waiting for their food, but behind the scenes, a fierce war of nerves was occurring.

“Originally, it was impossible for me to do this at this price, but I specifically did it for you.”

Tae-hyuk just glanced at the restaurant owner. Sometimes silence was worth 100 words when bargaining.

“C-Cough!”

The owner couldn't stand it and cleared his throat. Tae-hyuk slowly opened his mouth.



“A contract to rent the entire restaurant obviously included the food and the stage.”

“Yes... Of course, the food is made by the best chef as you said...”

“But the problem is that the show is missing.”

Sweat flowed down the owner’s chin. Today was Christmas Eve, the best day of the year. However, it was from the evening onwards. From 15:00 to 17:00, it was literally called Break Time where the restaurant was closed.

A customer specifically wanted to rent that time. As the owner, he naturally welcomed the customer with both hands. The meals could be cooked in advance, and he could serve it himself. But there was a problem. This wasn’t a simple restaurant, but a cafe restaurant that served food while watching a show.

“Ha, ha, ha... I am sorry for that. But really, you don’t have a person to perform?”

Tae-hyuk sighed.

By doing this, he could rent the restaurant at an unbelievably low price. But this trap was waiting for him. The atmosphere wouldn’t exist if there were no performances.

“It can’t be helped. Can I borrow the stage instead?”

“The stage?”

“Yes. A date should have music.”

The owner’s eyes shone.

“Will you be performing directly?”

“I will use classical music to set up the atmosphere.”

“Cough. Yes, I understand.”

Normally, he would absolutely never allow customers on stage. The expensive equipment could break, and it was against the policy of the restaurant. However, what was happening today was at the fault of the restaurant, so it was natural for the owner to take a low profile.

Tae-hyuk added one last thing.

“Oh, please note that the stage might be noisy. Even if the equipment is broken, I will reimburse you in full so don’t worry about it.”

“Haha, I understand. Then please show a great stage.”

The owner nodded with a pleasant expression. However, he was inwardly laughing. He thought that the customer just wanted to stand on the stage. At best, it would be a tambourine and some karaoke skills. Did he even know how to turn on the amps?

However, it was a money-giving customer, so the owner bowed politely.

“Then I have to go and prepare the dessert. The stage is opposite of the hallway.”

Tae-hyuk quickly headed to the place that the owner directed.

No show? Then he would do it himself.

Fortunately, there was still a bit of time until Nuclear Bomb’s henchmen arrived. He would come up with something suitable during that time.

---

Indeed, a sweet song added to the dating atmosphere. However, Tae-hyuk couldn’t handle instruments, no matter how many crime skills he had. But he could imitate voices, and he could use a CD for the accompaniment.

“Shouldn’t Ave Maria be played on Christmas?”

It was the song of greeting that was sung when the angel Gabriel

visited the Virgin Mary when baby Jesus was conceived. It was the best song for a date on Christmas Eve.

[Voice Modulation has been used.]

-You can directly imitate the voice of Lee Yong-ho.

Singer Lee Yong-ho! With his profound voice and gentle stage manners, he was a celebrity that sometimes appeared on TV.

‘It was worth spending a lot of money to watch his performance.’

Tae-hyuk laughed and turned on the microphone before singing along with the accompaniment. The restrained voice of a soprano spread throughout the restaurant and into the hearts of those listening.

After singing a song to praise Mary, it was time for a carol. The favourite song of the Koreans was Mariah Carey’s All I Want For Christmas Is You. It would make the heart that rose up from Ave Maria pound even more.

Cho Kang-suk and Seo Ha-ran. The stage for only those two was unfolding.

---

“Omo, there is suddenly a song. What song is this?”

“Ave Maria. It is so powerful that it doesn’t seem to be coming from a CD. It seems like someone is on stage.”

“I can’t see it from here... Are we sitting in a corner?”

Kang-suk discovered that they couldn’t see the stage from where they were sitting. Why did Tae-hyuk tell him to sit here?

Fortunately, the restaurant was empty. It would be good to sit in a place where they could see the stage well. Kang-suk thought so and asked Ha-ran.

“Do you want to move to a place where we can see the stage better?”

“Ah... I just feel like listening. In addition, I’d feel sorry for the waiter if I move the food after eating. We can just keep eating here...”

“Yes, I don’t care as long as Ha-ran is fine with it.”

Kang-suk gazed at Ha-ran sitting in front of him. She was so beautiful that it was hard for him to even look at her properly. Ha-ran blinked at him.

“I-Is there something on my face?”

“No. You are so beautiful.”

“...Y-You don't need to go that far...”

“Nope. I am serious. It is embarrassing that I can't even express the full extent of your beauty.”

Kang-suk's eyes were serious. At first, he thought that she was just a beautiful woman when they first met. When he met her the second time, he realized that it wasn't just her appearance that was beautiful. She was really sweet and beautiful...

“Hmm hmm...”

Kang-suk coughed while blushing,

“Ahaha... Kang-suk is also cool. Those clothes suit you really well.”

The two quietly started eating the food, and the music turned into an exciting carol. It was like a Christmas blessing for both of them. The date that started from the bowling alley, planetarium, and amusement park was nearing its end.

“Today was really fun. I'm scared to be this happy...”

At that moment, Ha-ran stopped. There was something strange.

All of a sudden, she felt a deep despair as she thought back.

As Ha-ran's face darkened, Kang-suk's expression became serious. He quietly wrapped his hands around Ha-ran's.

"Ha-ran. You know that my job is to catch criminals who have done bad things."

"Yes... I'm aware of that. You are doing a really good job."

"I punish those who are doing bad things. However, is there nothing in the opposite direction? I think I give their victims the right to be happy."

Ha-ran's eyes shone.

"Happy?"

"Today was fun."

"Yes, indeed."

"I don't want it to end today. I hope that Ha-ran will continue being happy in the future. So... Ah... That..."

Ha-ran realized that there was a strange attitude around Kang-suk. He kept putting his hands in his pocket and was touching

something.

Ha-ran smiled gently at the nervous Kang-suk.

“It’s okay. If your words are hard to say then I’ll wait. I’m really good at waiting. So please slow down and tell me. Yes? For example, I think I waited a long time for someone... Ahaha. I’m sorry. I’m tired.”

“Umm. T-Then, by the way, will you date me again next time?”

Kang-suk stuttered out. Ha-ran replied with a smile.

“Yes, okay.”

Kang-suk cheered. Although he couldn’t communicate everything properly, he could do it slowly from now on.

“Ah right, Ha-ran. After the meal, there is a place I’d like to go with you. This wasn’t in the original plan, but I’m sure that you’ll like it.”

“Huh?”

There was a large sack beside the table where the two people were sitting, large enough to accommodate one person.



Kang-suk looked at it and smiled. If he missed this on Christmas Eve then he would feel regret.

---

It was time for Nuclear Bomb to arrive.

“Wow, I thought this was going to be Hiroshima.”

He bribed one of the henchmen to report the movements of the group. They betrayed their group so easily for one million won. That was the weight of a bad group.

Unfortunately, the time constraints meant there was no encore. He received information from the source that the point of entry would be the through back door of the restaurant. Tae-hyuk moved to set up a trap that was prepared in advance.

Then once it was the scheduled time, voices were heard.

“It is here.”

“Are you sure?”

“Yes.”

“Then let’s go through the back door as I said before.”

The henchmen quickly followed Kang Han-seong's instructions, holding iron pipes and baseball bats in their hands. They weren't properly armed because they thought it would be a one-sided fight against Tae-hyuk.

Tae-hyuk clicked his tongue as he watched through the surveillance camera.

“Aigoo. Don't you know the basics of a raid? At least 30% of the total number of infiltrators should support from outside. Everyone coming in...”

Tae-hyuk confirmed that all of Kang Han-seong's group had entered and activated the trap.

“Uh, darkness?”

“Turn on the LED of your phones!”

“U-Ugh!”

“W-what is this?”

Kang Han-seong's group started screaming, as something sticky had covered them. Tae-hyuk turned on the light of the room and looked down at Kang Han-seong's group who were tangled together.

“...In this way, all of you are wiped out.”

It was a basic booby trap. Tae-hyuk set up a large net with glue at the expected point of infiltration. It had fallen and neutralized all but two people of the group of 10.

“W-What the fuck!”

“L-Let us go!”

Tae-hyuk shrugged. What was the point of installing a trap if he was just going to release them?

“Using this much force against a student.”

Tae-hyuk twisted the iron pipe that he equipped with the Violence skill and winked at one of the two people not trapped. That person was the spy.

Then Tae-hyuk asked,

“The two people left, do you want to be stuck together?”

“Ah, no!”

“Don’t!”

Tae-hyuk smiled wickedly at the mice stuck together.

“Now, what do I do with you?”

“I-I will kill you! Release me right now!”

“There are so many false words. Ah, yes. This is an opportunity to experiment with a new magic.”

“M-Magic? What are you...!”

Kang Han-seong trembled.

“It won’t hurt. Hang in there.”

Tae-hyuk lightly stepped forward and touched the bodies of the gangsters lying on the ground. Numerous messages appeared in front of him. He practiced so much that he could alternate stealing the clothes of the opponents.

The clothing that the opponents were wearing moved to his right hand. He threw them away and tapped another person lightly with his other hand. After repeating this a few times, he was able to strip all eight people of their clothes.

“Arggggghh!”

“W-What? What did you do?”

“T-T-That bastard!”

The gangsters started to scream. Tae-hyuk smirked.

“I left your underwear behind due to my conscience. Now, shutter time!”

He pulled out a camera and started to take photos of the naked men thrashing around.

Click! Click!

“Ohhh.....”

Kang Han-seong’s group moaned.

“Your personal motto was ‘to live and die like men’ right? Then what would happen if these photos were scattered around the neighbourhood?”

“S-Stop!”

“Are you short on words?”

“P-Please stop!”

Tae-hyuk sat on a chair and showed the people the photos he just took on the digital camera. Screams could be heard from here and there.

“Now, let’s negotiate. Will you continue to fight me as enemies? Of course, if you do so, then you won’t be able to prevent these photos from being printed and scattered around. Or I can give you a part time job taking care of things that I’d rather not do. Of course, I will take care of the costs. Well. This much for one time?”

Tae-hyuk quietly raised two fingers. Kang Han-seong swallowed his saliva.

All of a sudden, there was an offer from the opponent.

“This doesn’t mean that you will become my subordinates. It is just a formal contract. Of course, I am the one in charge.”

“D-Do you mean things like beating up your enemies?”

“You understand quickly. It is something similar.”

Tae-hyuk looked at Kang Han-seong and his henchmen.

‘I need some long-term pieces I can move at will.’

If he gave them money then he could use them moderately. He

would be able to use them to fight other criminals in the future.

# Chapter 71 – DATE HARD 2.0 #4

---

“The money offered is 200,000 won?”

“Aish, it can’t be.”

“220,000?”

It was more than he thought, so Kang Han-seong stuttered. Tae-hyuk joined his thumb and index finger together to make another circle.

“C-Cough... It isn’t a bad opportunity.”

“Of course, I’m doing this after thinking of your position. How about it?”

Tae-hyuk’s suggestion was like the devil’s temptation to Kang Han-seong. Money was money, but if those photos were known to the neighborhood, then he would have to immediately step down from his position in Nuclear Bomb.

In the end, Kang Han-seong made a decision and nodded,

“You are Tae-hyuk? This is a contractual relationship, and I absolutely won’t be your subordinate.”

Tae-hyuk laughed.



“I did not need such subordinates.”

He turned the iron pipe round and round and released the net and glue. The trick was simple. He stole the net and glue from the other person using Robbery and gathered it neatly in one hand.

The released people ran towards the clothes that were piled up.

“Hey, that is my clothing!”

“This is mine!”

“Check your eyes!”

The gangsters fought each other to get dressed before standing in a line in front of Tae-hyuk.

“Anyone who has a complaint can tell me. I’ll make sure that you don’t get bored. Of course, then you won’t be able to receive compensation.”

“.....”

The gangsters were quiet. It had already been discussed by the representatives. These henchmen were in a situation where they couldn’t talk, even if they were disgruntled. Besides, they couldn’t defeat Tae-hyuk in a 1 on 1 fight anyways. In fact, this problem

ended well. It was two million won per case. Even if it was shared between 10 people, it was still a large amount.

Where else could they make that type of money? Tae-hyuk used a carrot and stick approach to tame the wild gangsters.

“Oh right, I have something for you to do right now.”

“W-What is it?”

“Ah, relax. Do you see that Hyung out there?”

“Yes... Uh. Eh?”

“It isn’t hard. I just want you to act as usual. The details...”

Tae-hyuk told them his plan for Kang-suk while Kang Han-seong nodded with understanding.

“Ah! Then you want to increase his manliness through this?”

“Exactly.”

“We can really get two million won if we do this?”

“I’ll give it in cash. Of course, I can’t give you the photos I just took. Once I am assured of a good relationship, I will hand it over.”

“C-Cough.”

Considering Han-seong’s position, it wasn’t a bad offer. He soon forgot why he came here as he discussed the plan to become a villain.

Then the ambitious gangsters were ready to go and pick a fight with Kang-suk. However, the restaurant was already empty.

Tae-hyuk muttered with a blank expression.

“Kang-suk hyung. Your progress is too fast! Already...”

---

In the end, after looking like a dog chasing after a chicken, Tae-hyuk mentally educated the gangsters. Kang Han-seong remembered that Tae-hyuk went to A High School and asked.

“I don’t need to babysit your fellow students right?”

Tae-hyuk nodded, as he wasn’t their leader. There was no obligation to guard all the students. However, there were exceptions.

“Wait a minute. Do you want me to show you something interesting?”

“Huh?”

“From now on, this tree will be half gone.”

Tae-hyuk walked to a big tree outside the restaurant. Then he literally swung his iron pipe with all his strength.

Kuuong!

There was a loud sound and half of the wood disappeared.

“If you touch any person under my protection then you will be very sick.”

“H-Hik!”

The gangsters’ paled at the power of the iron pipe. How the hell did he have so much strength?

Kang Han-seong realized that he had touched a sleeping lion. It was fortunate that Tae-hyuk hadn’t used violence on them.

“I’m looking forward to your work in the future, Han-seong hyung.”

Tae-hyuk smiled and stretched out his hand, and Kang Han-

seong started sweating as he shook it. This considerably improved the relationship between the two people.

---

“You look really beautiful dressed up. But from now on, a change of clothes is needed.”

“Huh?”

Ha-ran’s eyes widened with surprise. Kang-suk sweat the moment he realized what he said.

“Uh, ugh... H-Ha-ran! I-I absolutely am not taking you to a strange place!”

“Really?”

“I-I am Cho Kang-suk. Do you believe me?”

Kang-suk was speechless.

The typical words of a bad man had emerged from his mouth.

“Ahaha...”

Kang-suk blushed as he showed her what was in the bag. It was a

Santa suit and a Christmas elf costume. Ha-ran's face reddened the moment she saw it.

Kang-suk took the Santa suit and said,

"A-After changing, there is a place I want you to come with me."

"...K-Kang-suk. A Santa costume is too crazy!"

"Huh? Aaaagh! It isn't like that! Ha-ran will wear the Christmas elf over there. I will wear the Santa costume."

"Ah..."

Kang-suk proposed wearing the Santa suit for his volunteer work. This was misunderstood as strange behaviour.

Ha-ran poked her fingers together in embarrassment. The two people laughed as they looked at each other.

"H-Ha-ran. What were you imagining?"

"Kang-suk should've given me a precise explanation!"

Kang-suk finally realized that his explanation was quite poor.

"Then I'll explain. There is an orphanage that I sponsor."

“Orphanage?”

“Yes. They have no parents to become Santa, so every year I become Santa. I wanted to go with Ha-ran this year so I prepared the costumes.”

Ha-ran started to move her fingers in circles.

“I-I-I didn’t know so I had some strange thoughts.”

“If you don’t mind, would you like to hand out gifts with me? Maybe you will like it as well. Oh, today was supposed to be a day for Ha-ran. Sorry for asking this all of a sudden.”

Ha-ran’s heart started to beat faster at the gruff, but warm Kang-suk.

“No. I want to go with you.”

“Yes. Then let’s change the clothes we are wearing. If we clearly explain to the owner then he will let us use the locker room. Oh, do you want to be Santa or the elf? It is a little big because the Santa costume is for men.”

“I’ll take the elf.”

The costume that Kang-suk provided wasn’t like Tinkerbell, who

was often the image when thinking of a fairy. It was a Christmas elf with pumpkin pants and a green cap.

“I’ve changed.”

“Me too.”

Ha-ran couldn’t resist laughing after seeing Kang-suk wearing Santa clothes and the beard.

“F-Fuhub...! I’m sorry. It really suits you.”

He looked like he was a mixed martial artist.

“I will really look like it if I carry the gifts. Haha.”

“Yes! Santa should have presents!”

“Then let’s go. The limo will be waiting.”

“Santa is coming in a limo instead of a sleigh. It is strangely modern.”

“Haha. Indeed.”

The two people looked at each other and laughed.



The prepared gifts weren't that expensive. Teddy bears, crayons, sketchbooks, lego toys, etc. The name of each child was written on the wrapping paper.

Ha-ran asked after seeing it.

“Did you prepare everything they wanted?”

“Yes. Last month, I asked them to write down any gift that they wanted to receive from Grandpa Santa. I prepared their gifts to the best of my ability.”

“That is really great. You do this every year?”

“I started five years ago. But a few years ago, they started telling me to bring Rudolph or an elf. That reminded me to ask Ha-ran to join me.”

Ha-ran realized that the children knew Santa's identity, and she could understand the meaning of the children telling Kang-suk not to come alone. Her chest warmed at their consideration towards each other.

“So shall we do this?”

“Yes!”

She was carrying heavy gifts but her footsteps seemed strangely light.

---

“Hohoho! Kids, Santa is here!”

“Wah! Kang-suk o... No, Santa oppa!”

“Today I even brought an elf noona!”

“Wah! Oppa is good!”

The children of the orphanage cheered at Santa Kang-suk's appearance. The popularity of Santa Kang-suk was enormous. The amount of gifts was too much for Kang-suk to carry alone, so Ha-ran arrived a bit later with some gifts.

“Haha! Elf noona is also working!”

Ha-ran raised her hand and said,

“Now, please stand in a line to make it easier for Grandpa Santa to hand out the gifts!”

A girl, who seemed to be an elementary student, shook her head and said,

“Not grandpa! Oppa!”

“Yes, Santa oppa!”

Kang-suk was happy not to be called a grandpa.

Ha-ran felt strangely sorry. The kindergarten kids seemed to know the identity of Santa Kang-suk.

“Hohoho! Merry Christmas!”

Still, Ha-ran burst out laughing after seeing him desperately pretending to be Santa.

“Wah! Elf unni! Your smile is so beautiful!”

“Thank you. Since Santa oppa is busy, I will give out the gifts.”

“Yes~”

The kids gathered in front of Ha-ran like baby birds waiting for food. Ha-ran laughed at the cute faces. Then Ha-ran looked at Kang-suk who had children hanging on him. He did this type of thing every year, but he also worked day and night shifts to catch criminals. But this was more like a family than a sponsorship.

“Aigoo. Santa doesn’t have enough sense.”

Ha-ran suddenly heard a familiar voice from behind her. It was Seo Tae-hyuk, dressed as Rudolph.

“Eh? T-Tae-hyuk!”

“This can’t be missed when it is Christmas.”

Tae-hyuk started stacking some boxes. The children shrieked with joy when they saw it.

“Wah! Cake!”

“Chicken!”

“Rudolph is amazing!”

Santa Kang-suk asked Rudolph Tae-hyuk,

“H-How did you know?”

“Aigoo. You suddenly disappeared on the date. If you do this then you should tell me.”

“Haha. I forgot.”

“At any rate, I will share this. It is one box per two people. There is plenty.”

“As expected from our Rudolph!”

Santa Kang-suk, Rudolph Tae-hyuk and Elf Ha-ran. The three representatives of Christmas earnestly started the Christmas party with the children of the orphanage. Everyone gathered shouted with one heart.

“Merry Christmas!”

It was a fun party for a sacred night.

---

At dawn, it was a restaurant staff member who came to work and discovered it.

It was Christmas morning, but he could get more money on days like this. Anyway, it wasn't like he had family to spend the holidays with. He had to make as much money as possible to pay the rent for next month.

Snow had fallen overnight so the streets were covered.

“Hey, this is the devil's dung powder. I'll get rid of all this.”

In order to do business, the snow piled in front of the store had to be removed. The staff member grumbled as he shovelled the snow.

“Shit. It is cold.”

The weather was cold enough to petrify the brain. Every time he opened his mouth, a white cloud would emerge. At that moment, he found something strange in front of the restaurant.

“Christmas tree? There was something like this?”

The staff member spat on the white snow. The Christmas tree was decorated with something colorful, and the snow piled white on top of it.

“Did Boss put this up?”

If so, he needed to clean up the tree. The staff member started getting rid of the devil’s dung powder piled up on the tree. Then something red emerged. At first, he thought it was just a unique looking decoration. However, he realized it wasn’t ordinary as he looked closer.

“Huh? It is a little odd looking... Aaaaacck!”

The staff member shrieked as he realized what was on the tree. It was like the remains of a broken doll.

Small arms and slender legs. 10 or more of them hung from the tree. The thing he thought was a red ornament was actually blood flowing from the arms and legs.

“B-Body...!”

On Christmas morning, a tree decorated with body parts was found in front of a restaurant.

# Chapter 72 – Huge Reward #1

---

The man loved dolls. To be precise, he wasn't interested in humans.

Or rather, he was disillusioned. No matter how beautiful a person was, it was impossible for them to be perfect. If he looked closely, then there were always flaws somewhere on the human body.

In fact, the man wasn't like that in the beginning. He was someone who loved a woman. She was L, a national actress. He only saw her on TV, but the man thought of her as the ideal woman.

However, the man's love cooled down as there was a massive scandal that stirred the nation.

[Actress L's sex video leaked. National Actress has fallen?]

The man grew desperate, and he couldn't eat anything for a while. It had been two weeks since he was pushed into this corner.

Suddenly, the world's interest in L disappeared, but the man couldn't give up.

Then he came to a realization. If something went wrong, then he could replace it with something else. The man loved dolls, and his



specialty was in repairing them.

---

The Christmas party at the orphanage was finally settling down. Everyone was playing happily, eating Tae-hyuk's food, and watching Christmas specials on TV. Tae-hyuk laughed as he watched the way that the children were swarming to play with Santa Kang-suk.

“He is totally popular.”

He was so popular that little girls were standing in a line to marry him.

Tae-hyuk sat in a corner and drank his canned coffee with a tired face. He poured the can in his mouth and tasted a sweet liquid.

“Kyah~”

Tae-hyuk drank coffee with the atmosphere of a worker after a long night shift.

“Can I sit down next to you for a while?”

It was a young woman who seemed to be in her late 20s. She was a nun who cared for the children at St. Mary's Orphanage.

“I am a guest here. Rather, I should be the one asking for permission.”

“No. Everyone who comes here is the owner. Hello, I am Viviana.

“Sister Viviana, I am Seo Tae-hyuk.”

She didn't seem to be a foreigner, so it seemed like Viviana was a baptismal name. Viviana sat down next to Tae-hyuk and said,

“Praise Jesus. Thank you very much for coming today.”

“I just came to play with those two people. Kang-suk hyung said that he has already been sponsoring him for many years.”

Viviana laughed. It was a modest face without any makeup, but he felt strangely calm when she talked.

“I managed to operate this orphanage with the help of many people, and Cho Kang-suk is one of them.”

It was the first time that he had a conversation with a woman of this style. Tae-hyuk, who became uneasy, spoke gruffly,

“I don't think you came here just to chat. What can I do for you?”

“Yes, in fact, I wanted to ask you something.”

“Well, if I can answer it then I will.”

At that moment, Viviana’s face came close to him. An oddly sweet fragrance was evident.

“Hum hum. I think your face is too close.”

“Ah, I’m sorry. The other children shouldn’t hear this.”

“Then it can’t be helped.”

Viviana spoke in a low voice as if it was a forbidden story.

“Do you perhaps know a girl called Kim Soo-bin?”

Tae-hyuk narrowed his eyes.

“Why are you asking me that?”

“Oh, there isn’t any strange meaning. I just asked because you seem to be a similar age.”

“Then I guess Soo-bin is a high school student.”

“Yes. A freshman. Ah, could you please wait a moment? A

picture...”

Viviana rummaged through her pockets and found a piece of paper. Tae-hyuk coughed as he received the photo and opened it. A girl with a cheerful atmosphere was seen with Viviana. They looked like sisters, and were holding the V sign towards the camera. At first glance, Kim Soo-bin was a girl with a short haircut like a man.

“Do you know? Soo-bin is very pretty. If you see her then you would definitely remember.”

Viviana seemed to really care about the children here.

“I’m sorry, but this is the first time I’ve seen her. I’m sorry I’m not helpful.”

Viviana’s eyes widened and she waved her hands.

“Ah, no. I’m sorry. You must be confused since I asked such a sudden thing.”

Tae-hyuk wanted to know why she was asking such a question.

This was an orphanage. No matter how well the nuns took care of the children, they couldn’t feel parental love and a sense of belonging. There were those who wanted to leave here as quickly as possible.

In particular, the age of a high school student was the limit of staying in an orphanage. So Soo-bin must have left here earlier than planned.

“She must have run away from home.”

A shadow crossed Vivian’s face,

“Yes... Without saying a word to me...”

Suddenly, Viviana grabbed Tae-hyuk’s hand and spoke what was in her heart.

“If you see Soo-bin, then can you tell her that Sister Mom is waiting for her?”

She looked a little young to be called Mom, but he understood what she meant. Viviana thought of the children here as her children.

It was at that moment.

“Sister Viviana. You don’t have to ask it from someone like that. Soo-bin unni graduated from here.”

Viviana was filled with embarrassment.

“H-Hye-mi!”

Hye-mi was a girl who seemed to be a middle school student. She stared at Tae-hyuk like she wanted to eat him.

“I don’t like him. Are we beggars? Should I say thank you for buying chicken?”

She shook her head as if it was unacceptable. Viviana stopped Hye-mi and said,

“I-I’m really sorry. This child is called Song Hye-mi. She was close to Soo-bin so her nerves are sharp from Soo-bin’s disappearance. At any rate, I am very thankful for today. If you see Soobin then please tell her that Mother is waiting.”

Tae-hyuk scratched the back of his head. It seemed that the orphanage had complicated circumstances.

“Can I hear more about this story?”

A hard-faced Santa Kang-suk was standing there.

---

After leaving Ha-ran in charge of the children, Viviana, Tae-hyuk, Cho Kang-suk and Hye-mi gathered in the reception room.

Before starting the story, Viviana spoke firmly with Hye-mi.

“Hye-mi. You should just listen. Don’t say anything to the detective. Do you understand?”

“Bah. Sister Mom doesn’t have to worry. Am I a child?”

Kang-suk removed the beard on his chin and said,

“Sister Viviana. Soo-bin is gone, what happened?”

Viviana’s voice trembled as she spoke. Because she was so desperate, she told the story to Detective Kang-suk.

“It has been around a month since the day that Soo-bin went to school and didn’t come back.”

Kang-suk had already been doing volunteer work here for a few years and he knew most of the children. He had known Soo-bin since she was a child,

“Why didn’t you tell me this sooner?”

Kang-suk asked angrily.

“T-That... I contacted Gangdong Police Station but you weren’t there, so she was reported as missing.”

“Ah... It was around that time.”

Kang-suk sighed and leaned back in the chair. A month ago, he had been unbelievably busy due to the Hippo case. There was no way to get in contact with Kang-suk when the police station was called. He gave his phone number exactly for situations like this. Were they sorry about contacting a busy person?

“The next time this sort of thing happens, please contact me straight away. It is absolutely no trouble. Hah... I heard that there were a lot of disappearances happening these days, but I didn’t know it would happen around me.”

Tae-hyuk, who was listening to the side, interrupted the two people.

“If it was last month, was it after Actress Ryu Myung-hwa disappeared?”

Kang-suk looked at Tae-hyuk with an expression of great interest.

“How do you know so well? That’s right. Since then, the number of missing people have increased.”

“Aigoo...”



Tae-hyuk groaned.

He never dreamed that he would be involved in this incident.

Ryu Myung-hwa was one of the top three actresses. She disappeared in the wake of a private video leaking. There was speculation that she was staying quiet until the case was settled. However, her agency then reported her missing.

From then on, the frequency of missing girls increased dramatically. It was the Werther Effect, so to speak. It was similar to the phenomenon where a spike in suicides occurred after a celebrity committed suicide. It was a word derived from the sorrowful protagonist of Goethe's novel, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, that was published in 1744.

He committed suicide after a tragic love. It was so popular that Napoleon also carried the book with him. All over Europe, suicides started to spread as they imitated Werther. The total number of deaths was over 2,000 people.

At present, the development in the media meant that it wasn't hard to find the Werther effect.

Tae-hyuk bit his lip.

'If I remember correctly, this isn't just a simple missing persons case. Maybe...'

He had a bad feeling. For the first time, Tae-hyuk hoped that his thoughts were wrong.

Ddrrrung!

Someone's phone ringing interrupted Tae-hyuk's thoughts.

"Ah, I'm sorry. It is my phone. At such a late time..."

Kang-suk pulled out his phone and confirmed who it was from. He picked up the call and walked to a corner.

"Yes, this is Cho Kang-suk."

— .....

"M-Mutilation... What is this...?!"

— .....

He couldn't be sure of the conversation due to the distance. However, Tae-hyuk didn't miss the words spoken by Kang-suk.

Mutilation murder. Tae-hyuk bit his lip.

'Damn... It actually is that case.'

His bad feelings were always right. Cho Kang-suk approached them and said.

“I’m sorry but it seems like I have to go to work. I’m sorry.”

“Ah, it’s nothing.”

“I will come back tomorrow for more details. Tae-hyuk, Sister-nim, and Hye-min, I will be going now.”

Tae-hyuk spoke to the leaving Kang-suk in a quiet voice.

“Hyung. Have you discovered a clue regarding the missing people?”

“...Ah. I’ll tell you if there are more details.”

Tae-hyuk didn’t miss Kang-suk’s shaking. The phone call was clear: A mutilated murder victim was found. There was no harm in checking the identity against the missing people files at the police station. Of course, the probability that the body was Soo-bin wasn’t high. However, it wasn’t necessary to talk about the mutilation murder and make people uneasy.

This was why Kang-suk went to check without saying anything.

Tae-hyuk was immersed in his thoughts as Kang-suk left. This

was a prelude to the brutal killings of a madman called Doll Play, but that was the extent of Tae-hyuk's knowledge on the matter.

Seo Tae-hyuk had memories of the future. Until now, it had been easy to catch criminals using those memories. However, this mutilation murder case was different.

‘In the end, the killer of this case wasn’t caught.’

It ended with many victims. Tae-hyuk only knew a rough outline of what was reported in the news. The victims were only remembered with the initials A, B, and so on as they appeared in the news.

‘There was an orphan among the identified victims...’

Tae-hyuk felt like puking.

This was the first time. The events so far had been easily solved using his memories of the future. However, this time was different. He knew nothing, and he couldn't do anything. A sense of hopelessness filled Tae-hyuk's body.

Then an amazing thing happened. Tae-hyuk gazed at what was written on the Demon Revealing Mirror.

[New mission: Find Doll Play.]

[The following rewards can be obtained by clearing the mission.]

-10 blacklist points

-20 stat points

‘Wait. What? I can get all this by finding Doll Play?’

It was literally a huge reward!

Blacklist points was one of the upgrade conditions. He got one point every time he secured one member. In half a year, he had only collected 10 points. In addition, stat points? He could use it to raise his stats as he wished. If he got all that...

‘I can clearly meet the conditions to upgrade my rank! I can be a Noble!’

Tae-hyuk remembered something that he had forgotten for a bit.

He had two weapons. But he had forgotten about one for a while.

‘Yes, I have the crime skills!’

So far, he had only caught criminals that had already been arrested. However, what about catching a criminal that hadn't been caught?

It was perfect for Tae-hyuk's purpose of changing his fate. If this was possible, he would be able to change their fates.

Tae-hyuk's eyes started to blaze with passion.

The God of Crime started to move in order to catch the strongest enemy that he had encountered so far.

## Chapter 73 – Huge Reward #2

---

The man stared at the doll with adoring eyes. In the dark room, the doll's eyes stared back from where they were sitting. Its flesh was milky white, and its glistening hair gently swayed in the air.

“Don't worry, I'll fix all the broken parts.”

The man unknowingly brought his nose to the doll's hair and deeply inhaled.

“Hah... Smells good...”

In particular, it was the doll's large black eyes that caught the man's heart. It was shimmering with a deep light that was charming enough to suck him in.

“Oof...! Oof...!”

The man touched the doll's chin as it tried to speak.

“It seems that I need more tools to fix you properly.”

The man exited his studio and started the car, a big van for a single man. He had purchased this a while ago for some hidden uses. No matter how crazy for dolls the man was, he had to be careful about other people's eyes.

On the surface, the dolls looked exactly like humans, and strange misunderstandings could occur. The man went to the nearest store and bought sunglasses before roaming around to a store in order to find a suitable tool.

At that moment, a salesperson came up to him and asked,

“Customer-nim. Are you looking for something?”

“I’m looking for a stainless steel saw. It should be a big one.”

“It will be in the F-10 section.”

“Ah, that’s right. Thank you.”

With the help of the salesperson, he could easily buy what he wanted. Along with the stainless steel saw, he bought iron pipes. In addition, he bought a tarp large enough to cover a small room and a plastic container large enough for someone to enter. Finally, he also purchased a travel bag.

Then he went up to the counter to pay.

“How will you pay?”

“Cash.”



When combined, the cash was over 400,000 won.

“Do you have a points card?”

“No.”

“Would you like a cash receipt?”

“There is no need.”

The man replied bluntly,

“Are you planning to travel somewhere? Do you want me to deliver it?”

The man spoke with an expression that seemed to warn the cashier to not interfere.

“I will move it. I brought a car.”

“Yes, I understand.”

The cashier at the checkout looked at the man with a strange glance. However, there was no need to worry. In order to buy this, he had deliberately headed to another city that was several hundred kilometres away. If there was a problem, then his whereabouts wouldn't be easily found.

The man loaded the things onto his van with a satisfied expression. He drove the car thinking about how to fix the doll.

“First of all, cut off the legs so that it can’t escape. In order to prevent the hands from doing anything bad...”

The man returned to his workplace with a smile on his face at the pleasant thought. The doll he wanted so much was waiting for him.

---

Kang-suk arrived at the scene where the mutilated bodies were found.

“I’m sorry, but you can’t come in here.”

A man in a police uniform blocked the road. Kang-suk pulled out his police badge and showed it to the officer.

“I am Detective Cho Kang-suk from Kangdong Police Station.”

“Ah, thank you for your trouble.”

“Is Investigator Joo Hyun-ho inside?”

“Yes. Please come this way.”

After entering the restaurant with the police officer, he saw Joo Hyun-ho talking to a staff member.

“Ah! Sunbae! This is a big hit, it is quite brilliant.”

Joo Hyun-ho greeted him with a cheerful face that was unsuitable for the crime scene.

“Hey. It is wrong to say such a thing here.”

“Haha. What about you? Anyway, we aren’t the only ones here. Hurry and listen to the explanation. By the way, what is that doing there?”

“Eh?”

Joo Hyun-ho tapped his head with his fingers and Kang-suk realized what it meant as he reached for his head. He had failed to remove the Santa hat.

“You seemed to be having a good time.”

“At any rate, describe the case. What’s going on?”

“By the way, why did Sunbae suddenly come? I asked Coroner Park for support because of a lack of manpower. Sunbae didn’t need to come.”

“Aish. I am just a little anxious about something.”

Kang-suk caught Hyun-ho in a headlock.

“Kek, kek! I-I surrender!”

At this point, Kang-suk thought that this guy might be enjoying it.

Joo Hyun-ho gave a simple overview of the case.

The body...

No, the first one who found it was a staff member at the restaurant where they were gathered. He went to work at dawn to clean up. He said he had been cleaning the overnight snow when he found a Christmas tree that was decorated with arms and legs.

Kang-suk's expression changed as he listened to Joo Hyun-ho's story.

“Crazy... How many were killed?”

“There were five arms and seven legs... There are at least four people.”

Kang-suk's mouth twitched.

“What do you mean at least four people?”

“That... The explanation is a bit long. Is it okay?”

“Yes, tell me.”

“There are seven legs, so there are at least four people. What does Sunbae think is the psychology of a person who commits a mutilation murder?”

“...They are making it smaller so the body is easier to handle?”

“Something like that. First of all, people often go mad for a while when committing murder. However, when a body is mutilated, the mental state stays extremely rational.”

“Crazy. Then the person who did this is sane?”

“Yes. Even if someone kills a person accidentally, they can't accidentally cut people up.”

Joo Hyun-ho said in a casual voice like he was exchanging small talk.

“Huu...”

Kang-suk couldn't help sighing.

“At any rate, the psychology of a person who kills and then mutilates is quite simple. They want to return to a normal life in some way.”

“Um... They killed a person.”

Kang-suk licked his lips. He suddenly felt like a gangster. He felt wrong today.

“They want to get rid of the body in front of them, so they throw it into the sea or bury it on a mountain. In short, they want it to go unnoticed in society.”

A question popped into Kang-suk's head.

“So why cut it off? You can get rid of the body without doing that. Rather, it would take more time.”

Joo Hyun-ho used his fingers to make gestures of his arms and legs being cut off.

“The reason for a mutilation murder is very simple. They think that cutting that the body into smaller pieces is easier to carry and less noticeable.”

“Kuoong...”

Kang-suk didn't want to know this about the psychology of criminals.

“But this case is unusual.”

“Because they were used to decorate a tree?”

“Yes. It isn't typical for a normal mutilation killer. It's like he is boasting of his crime... Did you hear about the person who cut off and kept the body parts of the people that they killed in the war?”

“What...? There are also such people.”

“It seems like this killer is proud that he murdered so many people. Ah, that is why I said there were at least four victims. That...”

“That?”

“He ran out of space to decorate the Christmas tree.”

“Fuck...”

“Either way, this isn't an ordinary murderer. I'll try a simple profile. He is probably a fairly educated professional in his early to

mid 30s. He cares a lot about his appearance, and in addition, he has a large desire to show off. Did I talk about the loot? He thinks what he does is a work of art. That is why he made a sculpture to show off to others. It is similar to an avant-garde performer using dolls... I don't remember exactly but I saw it in a magazine. Haha!"

"Dolls?"

"Yes. Doing strange things like cutting off the arms and legs of the dolls and switching them around. There was a surprisingly good response to it. The exhibition wasn't long ago."

Kang-suk's eyes sharpened.

"Can you find out more about that?"

"Hrmm... I don't think it would have anything to do with this incident."

"Please."

"Well, if Sunbae says so then I'll try."

"Have the identities of any of the victims been discovered yet?"

"The coroner Park Min-soo is in charge of that. It looks like the results haven't come out yet. You call him, as I am a little uncomfortable."



“You just don’t fit with him. Anyway, I will call...”

Kang-suk called Park Min-soo to see if he confirmed any of the identities.

“...Uh, yes. Thank you. Work hard.”

The conversation didn’t last long. Hyun-ho asked Kang-suk with an expression similar to a child receiving a gift.

“Were the identities of the victims revealed?”

“Min-soo says that it will be difficult to accurately identify them.”

Kang-suk scratched his head with a rough hand.

“Putting aside the legs, won’t the hands have fingerprints? I don’t think he erased the fingerprints with something like hydrochloric acid.”

Korean citizens had all 10 fingerprints registered as data which was used to determine the identity of the victim, as well as to arrest the criminal. It was often a tremendous help in the investigation.

“.....”

However, Kang-suk didn't say anything.

“Eh? Sunbae? Are you crying?”

“...What? Dust just entered my eyes.”

“At any rate, please tell me. Otherwise I can't do my job.”

Kang-suk looked at Joo Hyun-ho with red eyes. His expression was a mixture of many emotions.

“Unfortunately, all the fingerprints weren't registered.”

“Whoa! Then perhaps...”

Bam!

Kang-suk punched the wall with an angry expression.

“...Fuck. Yes. It means that all the victims were underage.”

At that moment, Hyun-ho could know what it was like to be able to kill someone with sheer force. If the criminal in the case appeared in front of Kang-suk right now, he would die instantly.

---

‘First of all, let’s think about why I was notified of Doll Play just now.’

Tae-hyuk started to slowly analyze the situation. The first thing that happened was Kim Soo-bin’s disappearance, who lived at St. Mary’s Orphanage. After gathering to listen to the details of the story, Kang-suk suddenly received news that a murder had happened. After that, Tae-hyuk received the notification to resolve the Doll Play situation.

In other words, Kim Soo-bin’s disappearance had to do with the mutilation murder case. It was right to interpret the two things as being related.

Anyway, Kang-suk would soon find out more about the mutilation murders. Then he would focus on solving Kim Soo-bin’s disappearance. In short, it was a division of labor.

Tae-hyuk decided to get some clues from Hye-mi.

“Are you called Hye-mi? Hello. I am Tae-hyuk.”

“Bah!”

He was ignored, but that wasn’t enough to make Tae-hyuk give up.

“Um. In fact, I also care about the missing Soo-bin. I want you to help me find her. Can you tell me anything?”

“.....”

Tae-hyuk knew how to persuade this type of girl. To this end, he created a poor atmosphere. He whistled and shook,

“Hwii~ if Hye-mi doesn’t help then I guess I have to look for myself. But if I find her myself, why don’t I ask for a kiss? Why are girls attracted to bad guys? Who knows what I will suggest.”

Hye-mi’s face turned white at my words.

“S-Stop. I understand. I’ll help you find Unni. Just please, no kiss...”

Tae-hyuk felt a lump in his chest at that moment. Was he such a bad person? So far, the only magic that he used...

Hye-mi fidgeted with her fingers and started talking.

“I’ll tell you first. I live with Soo-bin unni at this orphanage, but we aren’t orphans. Don’t be mistaken.”

Tae-hyuk nodded.

“Understood.”

“I met Unni for the first time at the Emergency Relief Centre.”

Hye-mi and Soo-bin, two victims of domestic violence. These victims had the nickname of DV.

## Chapter 74 – Huge Reward #3

---

“My dad was like human garbage. My mother got out of the house early, and by the time I grew up, I had bruises all over my body. I couldn’t take it anymore. When I recovered my spirit, I was in the middle of nowhere.”

Her voice was calm, as if she was telling someone else’s story. Hye-mi arrived at the Emergency Relief Centre a year ago, where other children with similar situations were gathered.

“The treatment I received there wasn’t that good. Well, that’s the mindset of the Korean people. It is the role of a parent to punish their child. I was seen as a troublemaker who ran away because I didn’t like my home. Up to now, my explanation seemed like a rough morning drama.”

They absolutely weren’t pleasant memories. Still, Hye-mi continued to speak with a serene expression. It felt like her sorrow had already become weathered down in the passage of time.

“It is strange isn’t it? That place seemed to have gathered all the misery in the world in the same place. When I was there, happiness felt like an illusion that I couldn’t have. And then I met Unni. Despite what she suffered, Unni was always the one taking care of the crying or depressed children.”

Tae-hyuk visualized An Eun-young and nodded,

“There are people like that.”

Hye-mi's frozen expression slightly softened.

"I think it's easy to talk to you. Normally I only get one of two reactions when I tell my story, but you don't have either of them."

Tae-hyuk seemed to know whether what she was saying. She either received sympathy or contempt, feelings that made a person feel miserable.

"At any rate, I will continue the story."

"Yes."

Hye-mi's story continued.

The two people suddenly became friends as Soo-bin looked after Hye-mi like an older sister. Hye-mi always followed along behind her. The only uneasy thing was that they didn't know when they would be separated. The Emergency Relief Centre was just a temporary residence for people affected by domestic violence. The children there would either return home or go to a facility.

Hye-mi and Soo-bin would be separated. Then a small miracle happened. The two people were sent to the same orphanage. It was a one in a hundred chance. Once it was decided, they were so delighted that they hugged each other.

“Many things happened after we came to the orphanage. Sometimes, my drunk dad came and asked for his daughter to be returned. There was a thief in middle school, so I received a nighttime punishment. However, Unni was able to help me successfully overcome everything and anything that came my way.”

Hye-mi and Soo-bin were family to each other. They fought against the discrimination of the world with their slender bodies.

“But there was one mistake. It wouldn’t end with living at the same orphanage. For Unni, she only had two years left to live here, so we made a promise. As soon as possible, we would make a lot of money so that we could live together. This is the token.”

Hye-mi pushed out her left hand.

There was something like a copper ring on his little finger. It was bumpy, like it wasn’t properly made.

Contrary to appearances, Tae-hyuk was well versed in art and quickly noticed what it was.

“Uh, is that a bearing?” (Referring to the ball bearing that reduces friction between moving parts)

“Yes. Unni got it. She didn’t want to be in school and got a job as soon as possible. That is where Unni first made this. There was no money to buy a ring.”



Putting a ring on their little fingers meant fulfilling their wish. Soo-bin was obviously filled with the desire to live with Hye-mi away from the orphanage as quickly as possible. There was another meaning to the ring, however.

“Either way, do you understand now? This is a token of my promise with Unni. I will continue wearing this on my finger as I promised. Unni didn’t run away. I’m sure she was scouted into a company and got a good job. Once she makes a lot of money, she will come back for me.”

Hye-mi looked at the ring on her left little finger. To her, this ring given by Soo-bin was more precious than a gold ring that was worth a hundred, no a thousand times more.

“Hrmm...”

Tae-hyuk groaned.

After hearing Hye-mi’s story, his doubts changed into conviction. Soo-bin didn’t run away, and was involved in this case. The problem was that it wasn’t exactly clear how.

Tae-hyuk started organizing things.

‘Right now, three different cases are happening at the same time.’

First, the disappearance of the famous actress Ryu Myung-hwa. Then girls started disappearing like they were following her example. The final case was the mutilation murder that Kang-suk went to investigate. How were they related to each other?

‘Indeed, this case is too complicated. In the end, the killer didn’t get caught.’

Tae-hyuk knew the future. It also meant that he only knew about what happened in the future. He had no information about the culprit behind this case.

At that moment, Tae-hyuk smiled.

‘Truly. Isn’t it all the same? So far, I have been fouling.’

Tae-hyuk had to dig into the truth of the incidents with just his crime skills and Tae-hyuk’s own abilities. Therefore, the reward was huge, compared to what he had seen so far. Either way, Tae-hyuk squeezed out as much knowledge of the future as possible. Then he remembered one useful thing.

‘Wasn’t Gangdong Police Station the headquarters of this doll case? And the coroner is...’

First of all, he wanted to identify the body that was found this time. And maybe...

Tae-hyuk put on as good of an expression as possible and said,

“Hye-mi. Do you want to go to a place where Soo-bin might be?”

“Huh? What are you talking about?”

“I’m not sure. No one knows if Soo-bin is there or not. So I wanted to check. Perhaps in this world, you are the one who knows the most about Soo-bin.”

Hye-mi looked at him with a bemused expression.

“You want me to help you?”

“I guess so.”

Most of the adults treated Hye-mi as a poor child, yet he asked for her help? It was the first time she had received such an offer. Hye-mi didn’t dislike it so she nodded.

“Well, I can help since you asked me.”

There was a need to pay for the transaction. Tae-hyuk decided to buy a meal.

“I’ll treat you to a delicious meal. How about burgers?”

“Beef rib eye.”

Tae-hyuk was at a loss for words. He was a cheap citizen who ate spicy pork stir-fry on a date with Moonlight Flower, but beef? However, solving this case required Hye-mi's cooperation. He felt regret, but it couldn't be helped.

“...Okay. The negotiations are concluded.”

Hye-mi used what she had surprisingly well.

Tae-hyuk added one last thing.

“Ah right. Maybe I'll do something a bit bad. Keep it a secret from the adults.”

Tae-hyuk smiled with a downright villainous face.

“You are a bad person.”

---

Kang-suk, who received another call from Coroner Park Min-soo, didn't say anything for a while. His fingertips were slightly shaking. It ended up spreading to his whole body.

Kang-suk's condition wasn't normal, like a person suffering from a high fever.

Hyun-ho asked as he drank warm coffee next to Kang-suk.

“Sunbae. Didn’t you just receive a call from Coroner Park? What new information did you get? Have their identities been revealed?”

“...I’m sorry but I’m not in the mood for jokes. Can we just sit for a while?”

“Yes, I understand.”

Hyun-ho whistled and pulled out a notebook to write down what he had learned about the incident. The file name was untitled since the nickname of the criminal hadn’t come out yet. Thus, almost 20 minutes passed and he managed to clear up his mind.

Kang-suk slowly opened his dried lips.

“They are alive.”

“Huh? The victims?”

“Yes. He said they were alive.”

“...What does that mean?”

“Looking at the state of the body, the coroner can see how long they have been dead.”

“Indeed. That is the coroner’s job.”

“But this incident...”

“Yes. Please say it.”

“This case. Cutting off the arms and legs... He told me that the victim was alive when they were mutilated.”

“.....”

All expression disappeared from Joo Hyun-ho’s face.

“I’m going to cut apart this bastard alive!”

Cho Kang-suk howled like a wounded beast.

---

The arms and legs of the doll were cut off. The man looked at his work with satisfaction. It was almost like an artwork, but something was lacking.

“...Hey. Please don’t look at me with those eyes. Don’t worry. I’ll give you even more beautiful things.”

The doll was looking at the man with a mixture of contempt and fear. The man couldn't stand it and pulled the doll's eyes out.

“The arms, legs and eyes should come out.”

The man laughed. He was thinking about the very pretty eyes of a doll that he passed by chance a while ago. If he wanted, then he could get it.

The man hummed.

“I'll give her arms to hold me tightly, legs to run towards me, and... eyes so that she can only look at me.”

The man's insanity overflowed in the dark room. He didn't know how much time was remaining. However, if he hurried then he would be able to finish all the work before it was too late. The man went looking for parts to give the doll.

---

Tae-hyuk had Kang-suk's phone. It was a copy, but he could still get a glimpse of the call history and email. He used it to clearly understand the people around Kang-suk.

There were many things that could be done with it.

“Now, let's try it for the first time.”

[Voice Modulation has been used.]

-You can directly imitate the voice of Cho Kang-suk.

Tae-hyuk called Coroner Park Min-soo with a satisfied expression.

“Uh, Min-soo. Are you doing well?”

He heard a tired voice over the phone.

–I told you my lead. 10 minutes ago, I called and reported the situation. It is obvious that the victims were still alive when the mutilation occurred. Have you already forgotten?

“Haha, sorry. Actually, I called because I have a favor to ask.

–What is it?

“I have an important witness in this case, so I want to show them the bodies. I’ll send them to your location. Please.”

-Hey, that’s illegal.



“That is why I am asking you. It will just be between us.”

–Hmmm...

Park Min-soo hesitated a little before replying.

–Will this help you solve this case?

“Of course.”

–I understand. I am here alone now so I will secretly let them in.

“Thank you. Oh right, you know this is confidential?”

–I understand. I won't write it down and will take it to my grave.

“Then I'll pretend I don't know about this. You will do the same. At any rate, thank you. Then work hard.”

The call ended.

Tae-hyuk laughed. Park Min-soo seemed surprised that Cho Kang-suk had made such a request.

“Then a disguise... No, there is no need.”

Tae-hyuk was still wearing the Rudolph costume from the Christmas party.

“Well, I can say that I came from a part-time job.”

Tae-hyuk had an accurate grasp of Park Min-soo’s character. He didn’t care about trivial things, and once he concentrated, he only looked at the corpse.

“I think there are only strange people around Hyung.”

Tae-hyuk took a taxi and headed to the Gangdong Morgue. Of course, it was with Hye-mi. Hye-mi got off the car and looked around with a perplexed face. The atmosphere was unusual.

“W-Where is this? It isn’t a hospital...”

Tae-hyuk scratched the back of his head.

“Hye-mi. Don’t you want to find Soo-bin?”

“No. I have to. Unni didn’t come to pick me up so I have to go.”

“Then I’m sure that Soo-bin is here. Is it okay?”

Although Hye-mi was familiar with violence, it was different from death. That’s why she didn’t know that the scent of death

was blowing here.

“How do you know that Unni is here? Have you been kidnapped?”

“Well, it is similar?”

They moved to the side door of the morgue, where someone was standing in front of a chained door. It was Park Min-soo, whom he had contacted in advance. Tae-hyuk coughed a few times and walked over,

“Detective Cho Kang-suk sent me.”

“Really? Aigoo. She is a kid. Is this okay?”

Park Min-soo looked at Hye-mi with anxious eyes. He didn't notice the Rudolph costume that Tae-hyuk was wearing at all.

Hye-mi shook her head vigorously.

“I'm not a child. I am big.”

“I-I see. I understand. At any rate, I'm secretly letting you in. Please come quietly.”

Tae-hyuk and Hye-mi went inside with Park Min-soo. The place

where the bodies were kept was floor 1B.

“I’ll be on lookout so the both of you go in. I’ve put them all out so make sure you check it.”

“Yes.”

It was in order to keep the bodies from rotting.

Once they entered, the storage was so cold that it was like a refrigerated warehouse. There was an autopsy table covered in plastic in the middle of the room. It looked like doll arms and legs were arranged on top of it.

“D-Doll...?”

Hye-mi’s eyes trembled. The fluorescent lights blinked as if they had reached the end of their life.

“Unfortunately, they aren’t from dolls. Do you want to take a closer look?”

Hye-mi nodded silently and moved closer and she realized what was lying there.

“B-Body...”

“Shh. Someone outside will hear.”

Tae-hyuk put on some surgical gloves that was next to the table and handed a pair to Hye-mi. She said nothing and followed Tae-hyuk in putting on the gloves. Now, if she confirmed that none of the arms or legs were familiar then the long day would end.

“.....!”

At that time, Hye-mi suddenly sat down. Hye-mi had kept calm after her initial confusion. Then did she find something notable?

Tae-hyuk swallowed his saliva. He followed Hye-mi's gaze. It was a hand with a small cut on it. The hand wasn't that pretty. They were dirty with oil, and the nails were cut short. The only unusual thing was that it had an ugly, ring like object on the little finger.

“S-She was supposed to pick me up. It was a promise. The little finger...”

Hye-mi desperately rose from her spot. She walked towards the table like she wanted to make sure that what she saw was right. Her legs trembled so badly that it was like she would collapse at any moment. Despite that, she walked forward slowly, step by step.

Suddenly, a familiar hand was in front of Hye-mi's eyes. After touching it a few times to confirm it, Hye-mi hugged it and fell on the table. She started to cry as she brought the hand to her face.

“Uwah, uwaaaaah...!”

The impact caused the ring on the little finger of the arm to fall to the ground. It rolled away without anyone noticing. It was almost like it was speaking,

‘I’m sorry I couldn’t keep my promise.’

---

Tae-hyuk looked up at the ceiling.

He lost his appetite. Hye-mi was stunned and tired. Tae-hyuk carried her out and left the morgue. He bowed towards Park Min-soo who was smoking a cigarette outside.

That arm was clearly Kim Soo-bin’s, but it was only one arm. He compared it with the other parts, there was no other arm covered in oil like Soo-bin’s left arm.

Park Min-soo clearly said that the victim was still alive when the arm was cut off. There was a chance that she was still alive.

Tae-hyuk recalled what he knew of the Doll Play case. In the end, the identities of the mutilated bodies weren’t revealed. But now he figured it out.

The future had changed with the intervention of the God of Crime.

‘It is only one, but I know who the owner of the arm is. If so, I can do this investigation.’

The only thing left was to catch the criminal and uncover the truth of this incident. Tae-hyuk walked through the darkness.

He could hear Hye-mi breathing on his back.

Alive. Obviously alive.

‘I will go to rescue her and Kim Soo-bin won’t be dead.’

For Hye-mi, who desperately wanted to be happy. For the sake of the huge reward, Tae-hyuk decided to start a full-blown investigation.

# Chapter 75 – Doll Play #1

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There was a Christmas holiday mood on the streets. Despite the early hour, people were gathered together to enjoy the festival.

The new PD of ABS Station, Shin Se-ho, yawned as he watched the people. The Assistant Director, holding the camera, asked with a smile.

“PD-nim, did you have a late night yesterday?”

“Bah! I’m so numb that it feels like my bones are breaking. Originally, I tried to sleep until the afternoon but it couldn’t be helped. We are hyenas searching for a scoop.”

Shin Se-ho was suffering from the life of being a part time worker, so he had to go to the interview with an AD instead of a proper cameraman. He wanted to be in charge of a popular current affairs program one day. That opportunity might be surprisingly close.

Shin Se-ho rose from his seat. It was time for the investigators to go to work.

“Straighten your spirit. From now on, we are going into battle.”

The AD rubbed his hand on his shirt and asked,



“But PD-nim. What incident are we going to now?”

“Ah... I need to restore my spirit. I didn't explain. Amputated body parts were found yesterday morning, and the arms and legs were used to decorate a Christmas tree. It was already reported on the airwaves. I think it will probably be on air tomorrow.”

“Wah, jackpot... A completely psychotic bastard. By the way, I haven't seen it on the news.”

Shin Se-ho clicked his tongue with a regretful expression. He didn't know how the AD could get this job if he didn't know how the press worked.

“Of course not. What day is it today?”

“Christmas.”

“But what would happen if there was such drab news? On a day like today, the contents of the broadcast should only be delightful and warm.”

The AD nodded with an expression of understanding.

Then Shin Se-ho laughed and said,

“Of course, that is just for the big stations. We don't have to worry about public opinion so we will broadcast it today.”

“Did you get permission from the chief?”

“Of course. This evening, we will be the first ones to report on this incident during the golden hour. So shoot it properly. There is no time to edit it.”

“Yes! I understand.”

It was time for the interview. Shin Se-ho and the AD tried to enter the crime scene, but the police stopped them. They showed the ID of the broadcasting station and searched for Cho Kang-suk.

“Detective Cho! This is a coverage from ABS Station.”

Cho Kang-suk walked out of the crowd with a dignified expression.

“You have another coverage. Aigoo, you were sent again.”

Shin Se-ho laughed at Cho Kang-suk and waved,

“Wow, who is this? If it isn’t Detective Cho Kang-suk! You always seem to be busy. Haha.”

Of course, Cho Kang-suk wasn’t feeling very pleasant towards them.

“An interview will be tough right now. I can only give you a brief overview.”

It was a perfect response from the manual. However, Shin Se-ho wasn't satisfied with that much.

“Can't we see the bodies? They will be covered with a mosaic during the broadcast.”

“...Sorry, I'm afraid that isn't going to happen, as they have been transferred to the morgue.”

Kang-suk's voice was smoother than when they last met at the cafe. Kang-suk didn't like it, but he was on duty.

Shin Se-ho covered his mouth with his hand and whispered,

“I really can't see it? Ah right, there is a rumor that you have an important position right now. If you don't mind then please tell me about it.”

Kang-suk confirmed that the man holding the camera also had an audio recorder. If he made even one small mistake, then it would come out in the newspaper. The fatigue from staying up all night seemed to pile on him instantly.

Where did the PD get the scent? Rumors were surprisingly scary.

Maybe he even knew the existence of the [God of Crime]. Even so, he had to avoid letting that name out of his mouth.

“I’m sorry, but it is out of my purview. I’ll give you the interview and let you film the scene as much as possible. Although it is impossible to take you directly to the crime scene, you can draw a picture of the situation.

Shin Se-ho smiled. He knew that the police were hiding something. But right now, he wanted information about the case. He needed to draw the line precisely to get it.

“Then let’s go to a coffee shop nearby and talk. I’ll buy the coffee. In addition, I have a corporate card. Haha!”

Then Shin Se-ho gave a secret signal to the AD. As previously discussed, the AD disappeared from other people’s eyes into a nearby building. Kang-suk saw it and asked,

“Where is the cameraman?”

“He needed to go to the toilet all of a sudden.”

“I see.”

Shin Se-ho inwardly laughed.

What? They wouldn’t show the scene of the incident? He had

brought a camera equipped with a telephoto lens that cost several million won. It would be like capturing a vivid scene in front of him. He could do anything dirty in order to pick up a scoop. That was Shin Se-ho.

“Uh, I have a call so just give me a minute.”

Kang-suk hurriedly looked at his smartphone. Shin Se-ho noticed that Kang-suk’s expression changed as he confirmed the caller. It smelled like a scoop.

His prediction was accurate. The caller was [God of Crime].

“Yes, this is Cho Kang-suk.”

-Hello, Detective Cho Kang-suk. No, should I say Merry Christmas?

This time, it was Kim Do-shik’s voice. It was strange, even if Kang-suk knew the identity. How did that person change their voice?

“What is going on? I don’t think you would call just to say hello.”

-Don’t be so pushy. I am a little timid. Rather, I prepared a special Christmas gift for the police. I want to return the bomb that I couldn’t bring back the other day.

“...W-Where is it?”

–You’ve already received the ‘dolls’ as a present from someone else, but I haven’t started playing yet.

“Doll? Ah....”

Kang-suk’s eyes widened as he realized what the other person meant. The God of Crime was talking about this crime scene.

–Shouldn’t a party have firecrackers? So I’ve placed a bomb in there with Detective Cho Kang-suk.

“W-Wait a minute. D-Don’t tell me...!”

–You should hurry. It will go off in five minutes.

“Kuook...!”

Kang-suk gave a strange groan.

Was this revenge for the attempt to arrest him? It was confusing. After that, the person hung up.

Kang-suk rushed over to the police and said,

“W-We have to run away from here! There is a bomb! Tell the

people nearby to evacuate right now!”

“Huh?”

“B-Bomb?!”

The police moved quickly at Kang-suk’s words. It was fortunate that there was a blockade near the area, and civilian access was controlled. Shin Se-ho whistled as he grasped the atmosphere and walked up to Kang-suk.

“Huiyu. What is happening all of a sudden? You received notice of a bomb attack near here.”

Kang-suk made a mistake. He had forgotten about that person during the call.

“I’m sorry but Shin Se-ho PD should also evacuate. There was a tip that a bomb was installed here.”

“Whoa! Who was that call from just now? It seemed like you knew the person. Do the police have a type of inside contact with a terrorist organization? Can I think that?”

“Now isn’t the time to talk! Does this look like a prank? Bomb! Do you want your head to fly away?”

In the end, Kang-suk lost his temper. Shin Se-ho quietly

retreated, like a dog with its tail between its leg after being kicked. However, his body was shaking with joy.

His senses were telling him something. Something was happening here. It would be a scoop that surprised the world.

---

The AD, who set up his camera on the roof of a building that was 200m away from the crime scene, couldn't help sneezing.

“Ah... It is cold.”

It was much colder than he expected because he was so high up.

“Ah, that damn Shin Se-ho. Who wants to be an AD? Once I get promoted...”

He grumbled as he adjusted the camera's focus, but then he noticed something strange. The situation of the police gathered at the scene wasn't ordinary. It seemed as if they were running away.

The AD was puzzled.

At that time, a message came from Shin Se-ho.

–Jackpot. There is a bomb threat at the scene right now. If you find the culprit then this will be an enormous scoop! Get a close up



of the scene.

“A bomb...? No, then I...”

The AD was stunned. Even if he was 200 metres away, he didn't know how strong the blast was. He might end up being killed by the explosion, but Shin Se-ho wanted him to shoot the scene of the bomb exploding?

However, people needed to take risks to get a scoop. He wasn't a dedicated cameraman, but he had been holding it for five years. His journalist's heart started to blaze. It was like being a reporter in a war zone.

“Yes, a man only lives once. Today I will take the best video of my life!”

The AD focused on the scene and waited quietly. In no time, the police had evacuated so the street was empty.

“Huh? That person...?”

He was strangely dressed. He was wearing an opera mask on his face and a leather jacket. One hand was holding a long iron pipe.

“D-Don't tell me...! Terrorist?”

The AD swallowed his saliva. Maybe this really was a great scene.

At that moment, a strange thing happened. The unidentified man in an opera mask looked up at where the AD was.

“A-A coincidence?”

He was 200 metres away. Without the telephoto lens, a person would look smaller than an ant. Yet he was looking over here? A drop of sweat dripped down the AD’s nose.

Ssik-

However, it wasn’t a coincidence. The man in the opera mask smirked and his thumb across his neck.

“Hiiiik!”

He knew! That person knew he was here!

The AD sat down in fear.

---

“Now, this scene has been cleared of police.”

Tae-hyuk said with a satisfied expression.

“But what about that fly?”

He used Spying to check if there was anyone around. Expanding the scope of Spying had a limit of once per day. He noticed that someone was shooting this place from the roof of a building that was 206.2m away. Maybe it was a journalist or someone similar.

Tae-hyuk smirked and drew his thumb across his neck in a threatening gesture. It seemed like he would have to handle that after looking around the scene.

“Maybe it wouldn’t be so bad.”

He planned to debut the [God of Crime] to the media sooner or later. Maybe this was a good opportunity.

“Then let’s draw a picture.”

If he drew the scenery using Forgery, he could draw the powerful image that was contained in it. It was basically like psychometry as he drew what happened here. He could see traces of the past.

Tae-hyuk walked over to the tree that had been decorated with body parts and murmured,

“The bodies were taken away but the tree is still here?”

Blood was still remaining in some places. He would draw the

remaining image based on that.

“Easel OK, sketchbook OK, paints OK.”

After all the preparations were finished, Tae-hyuk triggered the Forgery skill. He started drawing in a relaxed posture like he was a landscape artist. At that moment, a strange illusion emerged in front of Tae-hyuk’s eyes.

“Ugh... It is the second time but I’m still not used to it.”

A woman was lying on an operating table, her face distorted in pain. But there wasn’t just one. On the other side, someone else...

“H-Heok... Keok!”

The image was over.

Obviously, it hadn’t occurred here. Perhaps it was the place of dismemberment.

“...Surgery?”

[The Forgery skill has found an intense image.]

[The work has been completed through automatic mode.]

---

Tae-hyuk swallowed his saliva and looked at the finished work and muttered in a low voice,

“Ah, this was the reason. It isn’t just a mutilation murder incident.”

He had captured the truth about the Doll Play Case.

## Chapter 76 – Doll Play #2

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Tae-hyuk finished drawing the picture and quickly left. Although the opera mask covered his face, it was still risky if he encountered Kang-suk here.

‘Maybe I should find another disguise.’

He had obtained this from one of the guests from the the Death Circus. The texture of the plaster mask wasn’t bad.

‘It’s better than wearing a stocking over my head. Doesn’t it liven up the atmosphere? It’s more fun than playing with dolls.’

Tae-hyuk looked at the image that he drew when he looked at the Christmas tree. It was a clue obtained by using one of his precious bombs. Of course it was valuable.

‘Then I will start earnestly going after Doll Play from tomorrow. First of all, let’s handle the witness.’

Tae-hyuk grabbed the iron pipe, turned, and headed toward the building where the witness was. Once he got to the roof, he saw two people. Tae-hyuk hid behind a wall and listened to their conversation.

“I thought the bomb was a dud so I ran over right away. Yes, what do you have?”

“Uh, that... That. Someone who looked like a criminal was walking around so I made sure to get him on my camera...”

“Ohhhh! Kwon Joon-hyuk! That is a big jackpot!”

Tae-hyuk looked at the man who praised the AD, Kwon Joon-hyuk. He didn't need to use the Spying skill to determine his name. Tae-hyuk knew who he was.

‘Whoa. I didn't think I would meet Shin Se-ho again here.’

It was a bit unpleasant to call it a relationship, but Tae-hyuk knew Shin Se-ho. He was a man who visited Tae-hyuk every day in jail, asking questions that invaded his privacy. Tae-hyuk was annoyed and eventually refused his visits every time. He was an enemy who waited for Seo Ha-ran's visits and questioned her against her will.

In other words, he was a man who would sell his soul for a scoop.

‘Wait a minute.’

Tae-hyuk remembered something strange.

In his past life, the media revealed that Ha-ran was his sister and turned her life into a mess. He remembered that Shin Se-ho was passing by when Seo Ha-ran left the visitation room. Maybe...

Tae-hyuk shot Shin Se-ho a cold look.

‘...For the sake of a scoop, he would even do a crime. I should take full advantage of this.’

Shin Se-ho reached out to Kwon Joon-hyuk.

“Let me see the video that you took.”

“That...that...”

“What is it? Why do you look so scared? What type of Islam terrorist group did you capture in the shot?”

Shin Se-ho spoke with an excited face. A video of the crime scene and a bomber. He could imagine how valuable it was.

In the end, Kwon Joon-hyuk explained what he saw. Shin Se-ho became upset and angry after hearing it.

“Are you crazy? You were looking at the person through a telephoto lens. This is 200 meters away. How could he see your face?”

“R-Really. The opera mask guy obviously saw me and smirked!”

Shin Se-ho clicked his tongue and shook his head.



“You definitely took the video right?”

“Yes. Please confirm it, PD-nim.”

“Yes. Let’s see what type of bastard we have here. Opera mask? Are you the Phantom or something? Puhaha!”

“Aaaagh!”

Shin Se-ho frowned at Kwon Joon-hyuk’s sudden scream.

“I almost fell because you scared me. Why are you making such a fuss? Did a crazy ghost appear or something?”

“T-That... P-PD-nim! B-Behind...!”

“What is behind... Arrrgh!”

Shin Se-ho looked back and fell down from surprise. A man in an opera mask was walking towards them with an iron pipe.

“Tsk tsu tsu. You should have believed in your subordinate. At least you could’ve run away then.”

“W-What are you?!”

“Someone who likes stealing, voice phishing, art forgery, gambling, and violence. Ah, I also just did a bomb attack.”

Shin Se-ho’s eyes widened.

The unidentified man suddenly laid a stone on the floor and smashed it.

“I’ll have to test whether your heads are harder than this stone when hit by an iron pipe.”

It was a threat that was several times more realistic than being threatened with a gun or a knife.

“A-Are you going to kill us?”

The opera masked man, Seo Tae-hyuk, slowly approached Shin Se-ho.

Horror filled Shin Se-ho and Kwon Joon-hyuk’s face as they backed away, their eyes the iron pipe the whole time. Suddenly, they reached a place where they couldn’t retreat anymore.

“Be careful. It would be funny if you fell.”

“.....”

“ABS Station PD, Shin Se-ho. I wanted to meet you at least once.”

“H-How do you know my name....”

“First of all, rest assured that I won’t hurt you. I just want a deal.”

“Deal?”

“Yes. First, erase the data from that camera. And if you do me a few favors, I will give you a huge scoop.”

Shin Se-ho swallowed his saliva. The person in front of him seemed like a monster that had come out from a movie, yet he was making an offer like this.

“But I only want to talk to you.”

He meant to get rid of the AD. Shin Se-ho nodded.

“I understand. Kwon Joon-hyuk. Go to the corner and cover your ears.”

“Yes, yep!” On the other side of the roof?”

“Yes.”

After Kwon Joon-hyuk disappeared, Tae-hyuk explained his proposal with a satisfied look. Shin Se-ho's fingers started to tremble. According to the opera masked man, it was an extraordinary scoop that would overturn the Korean media.

“I-Is that really true? Ah, no... What is it really?”

“It is up to you to accept my proposal or not, but I think you would be a fool if you refused.”

Shin Se-ho had a quick and accurate judgement. He ran to the AD in the corner, took out the memory from the camera, and handed it to Tae-hyuk.

“Thank you. Then I will contact you soon.”

“P-Please wait a moment.”

Shin Se-ho pulled his business card from his wallet.

“Call me at this number. A-And... Do you really want me to broadcast about the Bathroom Killer?”

Tae-hyuk laughed. It was the alias that the media had used for the Hippo case.

“Yes. Think of it as a down payment.”

“O-Oh my god... If it is known that the killer was a police officer...”

“Of course, I will send you the evidence. Well, can I send it to the address on this card?”

“Yes, yep!”

Shin Se-ho realized that the man in front of him was a treasure trove that couldn't be missed.

“Of course, if you break the rules that I set, then it will be detrimental to you.”

“Of course. However, Phantom... Haha, I thought of that name since you are wearing an opera mask. I mean, can I call you Phantom?”

Tae-hyuk laughed and nodded his head.

Phantom. It wasn't bad.

“Just call me that comfortably.”

“T-Then please go in peace!”

Shin Se-ho bowed.

Thus, the deal with the ABS Station PD, Shin Se-ho, was over. Pretty soon, the public would know of the existence of Phantom, the God of Crime.

---

There were dark circles under Kang-suk's eyes as he returned to the orphanage. Tae-hyuk paused from where he was playing with the children and asked,

“Uh, Kang-suk hyung. Did you just finish work now?”

“Yes. It is due to some completely crazy bastard.”

“Ohuhu... You must've had a hard time.”

Tae-hyuk, who knew exactly what Kang-suk had gone through, laughed lowly. After the deal with Shin Se-ho, Tae-hyuk had made a brilliant explosion as promised. Of course, it wasn't the special bomb made by Kim Tae-sung, but one that could be bought for 3,000 won. It was a fireworks display set.

‘Still, the police were able to recover one of the remaining four bombs so they didn't just suffer.’

The suffering of the police didn't end there. In the new year, those who tried to cover up the Hippo incident would be stripped of their clothes. Cho Kang-suk's position, as the one who arrested

the Hippo, would become even stronger.

Everything was going according to Tae-hyuk's plan.

‘Then I have to finish up with Doll Play.’

Tae-hyuk thought about it as he threw the dice.

“What, another 12? Is this person cheating right now?”

“Stop moving! Under him! Check if he has padded pants...”

Tae-hyuk grabbed the head of a screaming little boy.

In no time, there were tens of millions of won piled up in front of Tae-hyuk. Of course, it was fake money. On the game board, Seo Tae-hyuk's hotels and buildings were piled up like a mountain. The Gambling skill impacting things like throwing the dice, so he landed on the Seoul, New York, and London group. It wasn't easy to try and lose.

“Aah! I don't want to!”

Tae-hyuk licked his lips.

It wasn't easy to play with kids.

“Oh, Tae-hyuk. Don’t you have an aptitude for this? How about going down this path?”

“Aigoo. A police officer is recommending illegal gambling.”

“Hey. I’m talking about management, management.”

“Management? I was thinking of something similar.”

“That’s right. You will be a 3rd year next year, so it is time to think about the future. That reminds me, where is Ha-ran?”

“She is sleeping with the kids.”

Seo Ha-ran was lying in bed with Song Hye-mi, who had returned in shock.

Kang-suk sighed.

“Hah... In the end, our date ended like this.”

Thanks to the new case, he would become busier from tomorrow.

Before that, there was something left to do. Kang-suk put the heavy styrofoam box that he was holding down on the ground and opened it.



“Shall we have barbecue in the evening?”

The children who heard it cheered. Inside the box was 20kg of pork meat.

---

After a long Christmas, it was December 26th. There was still a week left of winter vacation, but Tae-hyuk had something to do.

“Then, let’s contact those kids first.”

Tae-hyuk contacted Kang Han-seong. Two days ago, Kang Han-seong had agreed to the proposal to work for two million won.

–It is Boss! Do you have a job for me?

“Yes. How many children can you move today?”

–Around seven to eight people.

“Um... It is a little lacking. If I double the money, can you gather around 20 people?”

–Hut, double... I understand. Then I will gather them there?

Tae-hyuk agreed and hung up.

This was enough. He could pay four million won to 20 people. Nuclear Bomb was a long term investment.

After an hour, they gathered at the construction site where Tae-hyuk first encountered them.

“Hyung-nim, who is that person?”

For some of the members, it was the first time they saw Tae-hyuk. Kang Han-seong glared.

“That person... Money... No, employer. Then I will talk to my employer for a while.”

“Yes, I understand.”

Han-seong scented money and approached Tae-hyuk.

“Boss! What is to be done?”

First of all, Tae-hyuk pulled out five million won from his pocket.

“Huhu... So much...”

“One million won is the budget for this. Distribute it properly and carry out the mission.”

“Ah... Yes, I understand.”

Han-seong licked his lips.

“Then I will explain what Nuclear Bomb has to do. You will go to all the orphanages in Seoul and check if there are any missing people recently.”

“Huh? Can’t you call and ask?”

It was a reasonable question, but this was information that couldn’t be obtained unless someone went in person.

“Of course I can. But let’s think simply. Your wife left the house, and now someone called asking if your wife has left the house. What would most people reply?”

“M-My wife didn’t leave the house!”

“Exactly. This is just an example. Think about it.”

“Cough... Boss is definitely correct. I would also be ashamed and not tell the truth.”

That was also why it was hard to solve domestic violence cases. It was hard to judge on the phone, so the caseworker would have to visit every day. By acting like a harmonious family, the person

could easily get rid of the charges.

Kang Han-seong nodded.

“There are roughly 40 orphanages in Seoul, so one person will be in charge of two places. Please note that you not only have to meet with the person in charge, but also talk to the children living there...”

Tae-hyuk then recalled the appearance of the thugs. They looked suspicious.

“...At any check, do as much as you can to check if there are any children who disappeared.”

“I understand.”

Kang Han-seong bowed politely.

It would take two to three hours to finish this. but each person could earn 100,000 won. It was 30,000 won per hour.

Of course, half of the share was distributed to the leader Kang Han-seong.

“Huhu... Two million won for a day of work. Boss, I will swear my allegiance forever.”

Kang Han-seong got up from his seat and delivered Tae-hyuk's instructions to his subordinates.

Tae-hyuk laughed as he sat on a chair and looked at the members of Nuclear Bomb.

## Chapter 77 – Doll Play #3

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The thugs spread out to the orphanages all over Seoul according to Kang Han-seong's order. Kang Han-seong yelled at those who tried to go empty-handed.

“If you just go there and ask for strange things, then they will be suspicious. Go buy a box of vitamin drinks and pretend you came for a volunteer activity. Go clean the toilets, play with the children, and gently squeeze out the information you want.”

“Hyung-nim's plan is truly smart!”

Kang Han-seong didn't become of the leaders of this gang just due to his fighting skills. He also had a surprisingly good head.

The gangsters bought vitamin drinks and headed over to the orphanages. Their excuse worked well because they were high school students.

“Are you here to do volunteer work?”

“Yes. I am a student from D High School.”

The staff member sent him a suspicious look, but nodded after seeing the student ID.

“What we need is...”

“I’m happy to do anything, I will even clean the toilets.”

“Eh? I see. Please do so.”

After a few moments.

“Student! You are more sincere than you look. Please eat these snacks and rest a little bit. I’ll take four hours of volunteer work.”

“Ah! Thank you. By the way, how long has Noona been here?”

Thus, the gangsters started collecting their information. Thanks to Kang Han-seong’s plan, it was surprisingly easy to gather information. The data piled up.

“Boss. This is an interim report.”

“Yes. Where should I look?”

Kang Han-seong laid out a map of Seoul that had been marked in advance before explaining each one.

“There are a total of 44 orphanages in Seoul. These 30 places are where the search is finished, and the rest will be finished soon.”

“So how many people are missing?”

“That... It is a bit strange. In most orphanages, the children run away just as they are about to leave that place. I arranged the dates and that was the common point. It is the same for each of them.”

Tae-hyuk touched his chin and thought of Kang Han-seong's investigation.

There was one thing that caught his attention.

“Then why wasn't it reported?”

“The reason is mostly similar: The children would leave soon anyway. The police didn't really listen since they were just orphans. There are hundreds of children who go missing in one year.”

The police in South Korea were only concerned with the disappearance of children who have parents. But they were orphans living in a facility.

“Then let's wait for the rest of the reports to come in before making a conclusion.”

“Yes, I understand.”

After three hours, all the information from the orphanages had been gathered. In the end, the conclusion was that children



disappeared from 40 of the 44 orphanages. That was a huge number, when taken as a percentage.

“There was no one who went to the orphanages to investigate the missing people?”

“It was the same person. Perhaps they didn’t investigate properly.”

“I see. Then it is a total wipe out.”

The gangsters found out when the children had disappeared. Tae-hyuk nodded with a satisfied expression.

They did a better job than he expected. Tae-hyuk pulled out a bundle of 50,000 won banknotes and handed it to Kang Han-seong. It was a huge five million won.

“T-This...!”

“Think of it as a reward. You did a better job than I thought. However, don’t think about taking that money alone but distribute it. I’m looking forward to your work in the future.”

“T-Thank you. Boss!”

It might be an over-investment, but Tae-hyuk shouldn’t spare on the carrots when he was trying to attract rabbits. Now Kang Han-

seong would try to accomplish whatever Tae-hyuk wanted with more effort.

Kang Han-seong got up from his seat with an impressed face and went outside. As Tae-hyuk stayed to look at the map alone, he found something strange.

“D-Don’t tell me...”

He took out a pen from his pocket and marked from the oldest one who went missing. There was an amazing result. It was a little off, but there was the shape of a circle. It was impossible to do without someone being involved.

“...They aren’t disappearances. It is a serial kidnapping of over 40 children. Obviously, one of those victims is Kim Soo-bin...”

Kim Soo-bin had been kidnapped relatively later, but if her severed arm had been found, the rest of the children... Tae-hyuk felt dizzy as he realized the ridiculous truth.

“Wake up Seo Tae-hyuk. There must be some clues.”

Tae-hyuk slapped his cheeks with both hands. There had to be something in advance to signify such a massive kidnapping spree. He had to find out what it was.

Tae-hyuk used Voice Modulation.

[Voice Modulation has been used.]

-You can imitate the voice of Kim Bum-soo.

Kim Bum-soo's voice was the best for this type of thing.

Tae-hyuk called the orphanage that had the first missing person. Then the voice of a middle-aged woman was heard.

“Hello? I am a welfare officer from the Department of Health and Welfare in Gangseo-gu.”

–Ah, thank you for your hard work. Did something happen?

The voice of the woman receiving the call was strangely flirtatious. It seemed to be due to Kim Bum-soo's voice, who was popular among middle aged women.

“Due to a recent incident, there is a child-welfare related rebate occurring. I wanted to contact you to see if anything unusual happened on October 7th.”

–At that time? Can you please wait a moment? I'll find the records.

“Yes.”

It worked really well. Kim Bum-soo acted as a king in historical dramas, as his profound voice gave a strange sense of trust.

–There were no visitors that day, but there was a health checkup at T Medical Centre on that day. Are you referring to this?

‘T Medical Centre...?’

“Yes, that’s right. Thank you for the answer.”

–Is it something that will cause the orphanage to be damaged?

“Of course not. Don’t worry.”

Tae-hyuk called a different orphanage. This time he just asked if they visited T Medical Centre on that day.

After he finished calling all the orphanages, Tae-hyuk sighed and leaned back in his chair.

“...All of them went missing shortly after a checkup.”

There was no evidence but he could feel it. Tae-hyuk stood up.

“It seems like I need Big Mama’s help.”

Only one small piece remained to reach the truth that nobody had revealed yet.

---

Kang-suk and Hyun-ho were discussing this incident.

“Well I think the killer is a very meticulous person.”

Hyun-ho stared blankly at Kang-suk.

“Sunbae. Didn’t I say that three days ago?”

“I haven’t finished speaking yet. Listen. At any rate, we have been looking for clues or witnesses by mobilizing the media, and there has been nothing so far. There was a plausible tip about a man wearing a mask that bought a saw, tarp, and plastic container. However, the payment was made in cash, and he moved in a position where he wasn’t caught on CCTV, so we can’t identify him.”

“Hrmm. Is the store far away from the crime scene?”

“Completely different cities.”

“That certainly sounds suspicious...”

There were no witnesses and no clues.

At that moment, Kang-suk stood up and beat on his chest.

“No matter how trivial the clue is, it is our job to squeeze out as much as possible. If the police gives up, then the case will remain forever unsolved. I want to solve this case.”

Joo Hyun-ho’s eyes shone.

“It has been a long time since the appearance of Senses Kang-suk.”

“There is something strange lingering in my mind. The other day, didn’t you tell me about an avant-garde performance using dolls? The artist changed the arms and legs.”

“Did I say that?”

“You certainly did. And there was one person who said something similar.”

“Who?”

“God of Crime.”

“Haha...”

Joo Hyun-ho laughed bitterly at the unexpected name.

“He said that this was playing with dolls. Obviously, the police are calling it the Christmas Tree Mutilation murders.”

“Doll play?”

The arms and legs of people were cut off and used to decorate a Christmas tree. If they switched the focus to dolls, then there was definitely someone who gave such a performance. The name of that person was...

“Yes. The doll artist you talked about the other day. I did some research on the Internet. Here.”

Kang-suk showed him the Internet screen on his phone. There were some photos of the famous person and his work.

“Hup...”

The doll’s arms and legs were cut off and switched to create a bizarre atmosphere.

“How is it? Similar?”

“Whoa. Once again, I think that Sunbae’s senses are really great!”

“Of course, this isn’t evidence that he is the killer. It might simply be coincidence or a copycat. But isn’t it worth visiting once?”

“Do you want to go together now?”

“Well, it has been on my mind for a while.”

Interestingly enough, the two people had been investigating together since the hippo incident. Joo Hyun-ho worked in the office to grasp the psychology of the criminal with the collected evidence, while Detective Kang-suk was the opposite.

A detective whose career was in fieldwork. He judged everything through seeing it and touching it directly. Although it was a little inefficient, most of the time he had great results.

Thus, the two of them had opposite styles. Even so, they strangely worked well together.

“First of all, let’s just talk to him to get his opinion first. You can show that you suspect him of being the criminal.”

“Aish, Sunbae. I’ve been working in the field for seven years. I won’t do that.”

“Okay. Then shall we call a taxi?”



“We can go in my car.”

Kang-suk shrugged.

Having a car made things much easier than he thought. If he got married then he would buy a car...

At that moment, Ha-ran’s face popped up, causing Kang-suk to cough.

---

“Is it here?”

“It seems like it. This is the workshop of the doll artist, Yoo Ho-jin. By the way. It is quite unique.”

It was a building with a pastel roof and pink bricks. It felt like looking at a doll house. Kang-suk laughed as soon as he got out of the car and saw the name on the nameplate.

[Doll House]

It was a really fitting name, and ‘the place for my beloved dolls’ was written in fine print. The artist seemed to be living a doll-like life here.

Kang-suk carefully knocked on the door.

“Who is it?”

A cracked and barren voice, like a broken vinyl record, was heard.

“Detective Cho Kang-suk from the Gangdong Police Station. Sorry, but are you Master Yoo Ho-jin?”

“That’s right. What is going on?”

He was a thin man in his early 40s. The door opened slightly and a cracked hand, that was like bark, protruded.

“There was a bizarre incident, and I heard that Master-nim was an expert in dolls, so I was hoping to get your opinion.”

Kang-suk pulled his police badge from his pocket and showed it. Yoo Ho-jin’s eyes peered at them from between the gap in the door.

“Did you bring a warrant?”

“I’m sorry, but not yet since I visited personally.”

“I’m busy because of work. Can you come back later?”

At those words, Yoo Ho-jin tried to close the door. However, Kang-suk was faster. He stuck his feet in the door and then literally forced it open.

“What are you doing? The police barging into my home...”

“It will only take a short time... heok!”

Kang-suk groaned as he entered the house. There was a ridiculous scene inside.

“...D-Dolls?”

There were dozens of cut off arm and legs from dolls. There were glass beads rolling around on the work table. Looking closer, they were the eyeballs of the dolls. There was a large stainless steel saw on the ground among doll pieces.

“T-This...”

Then Yoo Ho-jin shouted with an upset face.

“Y-You entered my workshop without permission! This is obviously a home invasion!”

Joo Hyun-ho picked up one of the doll arms and said,

“Sunbae. This is a doll.”

There was a plastic tub filled with what seemed to be doll heads. Kang-suk was confused. There was no evidence of any mutilated humans in the workshop. Was his feeling wrong?

Yoo Ho-jin’s face was red with anger,

“Master-nim. I’m sorry but could you take a look at these photos?”

“No, I mean get out of here right now... Um...?”

Yoo Ho-jin’s expression changed when Kang-suk showed him a photo of the Doll Play scene.

“What is this?”

“It is a murder scene that I am in charge of. Doesn’t it resemble your work?”

Yoo Ho-jin’s mouth twitched,

“The atmosphere is certainly quite similar. It is like what I am pursuing, and is why you can’t help but be suspicious. After seeing my workshop, do you understand that I work with dolls instead of people? Then get out right now.”

Yoo Ho-jin's voice had softened.

Kang-suk sighed.

Looking at the tools in the workshop, it must've been doll artist Yoo Ho-jin who bought the tools at the store. So was it really unrelated to dolls?

Kuuong!

At that moment, he heard a thumping sound from the ground. Kang-suk confirmed that Yoo Ho-jin's expression instantly changed.

He remembered seeing such a look before. Criminals gave such responses after their hidden weapons were found.

Then...

Kang-suk grabbed Yoo Ho-jin's arm and asked in a quiet voice.

“Master-nim. Do you have a basement here?”

## Chapter 78 – Doll Play #4

---

“I-I don’t have one.”

“Look straight into my eyes and repeat that.”

“.....”

Kang-suk signalled Hyun-ho to look around the room. Hyun-ho nodded without speaking and searched the room. The door to the basement that was hidden under the carpet wasn’t so difficult to find.

Kang-suk looked at the door with confidence. The lack of dust gathered on it meant that it was frequently accessed.

“Master-nim. Sorry, but can I go in and check it?”

Yoo Ho-jin’s face was pale as his shoulders slumped, seeming like he didn’t have the energy left to answer. Kang-suk grabbed the opponent’s arm so he couldn’t escape and went down to the basement. There was only one light bulb flashing inside the small room, with a woman tied up inside with a doll.

“A-Are you alright? Don’t worry. I am the police.”

“Oof! Oof!”

The woman desperately shook her body and banged her head against the wall. It was the identity of the sound that he had heard.

Kang-suk pulled out his handcuffs and put them around Yoo Ho-jin's hands.

"I am arresting you for kidnapping! You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law. You have the right to an attorney, and the right to have the attorney speak for you when you are asked a question. If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be provided for you. Do you understand the rights I have just read to you?"

"Sob..."

While Kang-suk was reading the Miranda rights, Hyun-ho was untying the woman.

"Are you okay?"

"...T-Thank you for saving me."

Hyun-ho's eyes widened as he confirmed her identity.

"I'm sorry, but are you Ryu Myung-hwa?"

"Yes, that's right..."

“Sunbae! It’s Ryu Myung-hwa, the actress who went missing a month ago!”

Thus, she was dramatically rescued from a criminal by Detective Cho Kang-suk.

---

They searched the basement and the attic, but couldn’t find any traces of anyone being killed. Kang-suk was praised by Kim Do-shik for resolving the disappearance of Ryu Myung-hwa.

But no matter how he thought about it, he couldn’t feel clean at all. In the end, he couldn’t find anything on the mutilation murderer.

Joo Hyun-ho was already inside the interrogation room, but Kang-suk couldn’t wait outside.

“Hyun-ho, sorry but I will be substituting.”

“Geez, a senior is trying to take away his junior’s rice bowl.”

“Go already. Either that, or you can watch from the sidelines.”

“You two have a good time, I’ll be eating some rice.”

Hyun-ho hummed before disappearing, leaving only Cho Kang-



suk and Yoo Ho-jin left inside the interrogation room.

Kang-suk sat on the chair and looked at the man on the other side. The doll artist seemed to have become 10 years older as he stared into the air with a blank expression. Before Kang-suk could speak, Yoo Ho-jin opened his mouth first.

“Detective-nim. I kidnapped Myung-hwa. However, I didn’t kill anyone. I have nothing to do with the mutilations.”

Anybody would become psychologically nervous when sitting handcuffed in a room. In such an atmosphere, the criminal tended to confess.

“So tell me the reason why a famous artist like you would kidnap Ryu Myung-hwa.”

Although he had been branded as a criminal, Kang-suk treated him as a human being. Yoo Ho-jin replied with a look of pleasure,

“I wanted a doll.”

“Doll?”

“Yes. No matter how perfect a human is, they can’t be truly perfect. Therefore, I decided to make the most beautiful doll in the world.”

Kang-suk inwardly sighed. What type of artist was this?

“I don’t understand. That doesn’t explain why you kidnapped Ryu Myung-hwa.”

“I wanted a doll that resembled her, a beauty that would last forever. But it wasn’t easy, since I couldn’t express everything I wanted. So I think I became crazy for a while.”

Kang-suk licked his lips. This was why he kidnapped a person and locked her in the basement?

“You didn’t harm her, and you also don’t have a criminal record, so it will be three year sentence.”

“Thank you. I was able to come back to my senses thanks to Detective-nim.”

In the end, the doll play of the artist who wanted to make the most perfect doll was over. Yoo Ho-jin suddenly called out the leaving Kang-suk, as if he remembered something.

“Ah, could you please wait a moment?”

“Huh?”

“I’ve been thinking about it. Decorating a Christmas tree with doll parts. I did a very similar work two years ago. That work was

definitely bought...”

Kang-suk gulped.

“If you tell me then I will lighten your sentence as much as possible.”

Yoo Ho-jin spoke hesitantly.

“Maybe I should say sorry in advance. Someone from China bought it.”

“Ah...”

Kang-suk sighed. It was almost impossible to find the whereabouts of a foreigner.

“Detective-nim, I hope you catch the killer. At any rate, I’m sorry for the inconvenience.”

“Please say that to the victim.”

“Yes...”

The first doll play was solved by Detective Cho Kang-suk of Gangdong Police Station’s 2nd team. However, Cho Kang-suk eventually couldn’t figure out the answer to the second doll play.

That incident seemed to be falling into a labyrinth.

A huge reversal was waiting.

---

“What, did you find a good way to make money?”

Big Mama greeted Tae-hyuk with a light smile. She was the owner of a pawn shop and was also a forgery specialist. However, it was an open secret that she was also a trader in buying and selling information.

“Do you have the information for T Medical Center that I previously requested?”

At that moment, a strange light flashed in Big Mama’s eyes.

“I felt like I was poking around a fortress.”

“A merchant sells goods and the customer pays. However, I am busy so please make this short.”

Tae-hyuk said this with a smile and Big Mama laughed. When she first met him six months ago, he had known nothing, but now he was a criminal.

“Of course, I have prepared it. This one is a little expensive.”

“How much?”

“Nine million.”

Tae-hyuk shrugged.

“That is cheaper than I thought.”

“Oh my. Your hands are getting bigger. Did you win the lottery or something?”

“I got something better than the lottery.”

Big Mama didn't ask further.

“If you have any questions about the real estate market, then don't hesitate to ask.”

Tae-hyuk laughed,

“Of course.”

Big Mama received the money from Tae-hyuk, put it in a safe, and then pulled out a bunch of papers from a box under the table. The transaction of a company's secrets was completed as if he was buying a drink.

“Can I read it here?”

“Yes.”

Tae-hyuk sat down in Big Mama’s workroom like it was his own home. The volume of the report was nice.

“Hrmm...”

On the surface, it seemed to be a medical center that was implementing noblesse oblige. They regularly provided medical support to the orphanages in the city, and even provided free hospitalization for injured children.

However, there were two unusual things about T Medical Center.

First of all, the percentage of Chinese patients was strangely high. It was said that there were a large number of wealthy Koreans living in China and that they often came to T Medical Center for difficult surgeries. Even so, it was an overwhelming proportion compared to the Korean patients.

“This concludes all the information that could be obtained legally. And now, it is time for the illegal content.”

Tae-hyuk turned the page. Unlike the previous page, this ink was different.

“Um... It disappears when exposed to air.”

He could only read it once. Tae-hyuk paid careful attention to each letter of the report.

T Medical Center strictly kept it a secret, but the frequency of organ transplants was much higher than other hospitals. It was as if T Medical Center itself existed only for organ transplantation.

Tae-hyuk licked his lips.

“...First, let me organize the case.”

The first thing that happened was the disappearance of actress Ryu Myung-hwa. After that, the children living in orphanages started to disappear.

It seemed to be a type of causal relationship; however, they had nothing to do with each other.

“And...”

The children in the Seoul orphanages started to disappear and after a while, their arms and legs were found decorating a tree. It seemed like a horrific mutilation murder case. Disappearing children

Health screenings on a regular basis. The rich people from China coming here for surgery. A hospital that specialized in organ transplants. All the pieces of the puzzle were revealed one by one.

Tae-hyuk was hit with a sudden wave of fatigue. If his reasoning was correct, this was an atrocious crime that didn't regard the children as humans.

“...In the first place, this isn't a mutilation murder case, it was just made to look like that.”

A bizarre doll play event that decorated the tree with body parts. It was done to make it look like murder.

“It is kidnapping for organ trafficking.”

Tae-hyuk reached the truth of the incident.

The police were trying to catch a murderer. In order to do this, they mobilized a nationwide investigation. However, they couldn't catch the culprit. It was natural. In the first place, the mutilation murderer didn't exist.

“This was the reason why it ended unsolved. The problem is logic, because the police were solving the wrong equation.”

Tae-hyuk searched the Internet for news on his smartphone. It was easy to find some relevant articles.



[Since earlier this year, organ transplant from death row prisoners is legally forbidden in China.]

China used to take the organs of death row prisoners and sell them for a lot of money to patients who needed transplants. It earned hundreds of millions of won every year. However, as the controversy over human rights violation persisted, it eventually became prohibited by law.

The Chinese medical community showed that the number of patients who need organ transplants every year in their country went up to 300,000, and that the actual number of organ transplant recipients was only 10,000. Furthermore, most of them were organs from the death row prisoners.

But now that had become impossible. Demand was overflowing but the supply was gone.

Then what would happen?

Tae-hyuk suddenly recalled a ghost story circulating the Internet. There were a large number of homeless people in front of the station and volunteers would come to give them bread and milk. But the next morning, the place where the homeless people should've been was empty.

However, there was one error in this ghost story. The organ

rating was assigned according to the health status. There was no way that the organs of old or sick people would be sold at an expensive price.

Then, what if the organs were young and healthy? There were also regular health checks to keep the organs at their best. Indeed, those ones would sell at an expensive price.

“Ugh...”

Tae-hyuk became nauseous as he thought about it.

The children were orphans. There was no family to mourn them if they disappeared. Nobody would look for them. The police would report them as simple runaways and not even investigate properly. They were the best prey for an organ trafficking ring.

Tae-hyuk recalled the children he met at St. Mary's Orphanage. There was a troublemaker who always drew on Kang-suk and the walls, and he wanted to become an artist. Some girls even cried at the dresses that Kang-suk gave them, since it was the first time they wore such pretty clothes.

T Medical Center was literally playing with dolls. They destroyed the arms of the expensive dolls, and then they fixed it for a cheap price. Such a terrible thing was still occurring somewhere.

Fury filled Tae-hyuk's face.

Seo Tae-hyuk put on the mask and became Phantom. Phantom muttered quietly,

“I will leave it to Cho Kang-suk to become angry.”

Freshness was vital for organ trafficking. Maybe a lot of the survivors were being held somewhere in T Medical Center. After saving them...

Smash T Medical Center.

“I’m sorry but I will finish this case. I don’t feel like giving it up.”

He had promised to rescue Kim Soo-bin. He could also get huge rewards from solving it.

This incident was the best chance to announce the Phantom.

For all of that...

It was Phantom, the God of Crime’s turn.

# Chapter 79 – Phantom Opens His Eyes #1

---

There was a somewhat unusual operating room in T Medical Center. It could only be reached through a few tightly controlled areas, and even the cleaners working there were tightly controlled. This was to prevent what was happening inside from being leaked anywhere.

Two young men in work clothes were cleaning the operating room after the operation was done.

“Fuck, the artery was hit again. It’s completely bloody in here.”

“Uh... The blood isn’t a joke.”

“Even so, I would rather do this, since it’s easy money.”

Then one of them asked,

“By the way, Hyung-nim. I have a question.”

“What is it? Ah, be careful there. If you fall then you will die. Your flesh will be cut off and sliced in pieces.”

The young man, who almost slipped, clicked his tongue and put the flesh into the bag.

“Why isn’t anesthesia used? Rather than cutting off one limb to

stop them from moving, it would be better to just inject them.”

The older one smirked at the youth’s question.

“Hey! If you care about that then you shouldn’t work here. The reason is simple. It’s just like how fish are kept alive for sashimi. Won’t the medicine affect the organs?”

The young man nodded with a face like he understood.

“At any rate, the cleaning of the operation room is almost finished... Now it is just throwing away the trash.”

“Yes. Bring some hydrochloric acid and plastic from the warehouse. After the room is soaked for 3~4 hours, it can be used. Put the rest in the drum barrel. Ah, prepare two drums.”

“Oh, one more is being done in the afternoon?”

“Yes. This is a really good business.”

Since the organs from prisoners were banned in China, those who needed transplants now came to Korea for the surgery. In particular, it was safer than China which normally had side effects due to the unhygienic surgical environment.

Recently, the global market was heavily saturated with organs from India and Southeast Asia. The most expensive parts, such as

the heart, liver and kidney, were traded for around 200 million won a piece.

However, T Medical Center had fresh organs that were checked by medical staff, making their prices were twice as high as international ones. Despite this fact, people still waited in line for them.

“I’s roughly 1.5 billion per person? I would be happy to sell mine at such a high price. I would die happy. Huhuhu...”

Then the operating room door opened and Dr. J, a surgeon, entered.

“What? It still isn’t clean? I told you to finish it as quickly as possible, didn’t you hear me? Why are you just standing around?”

The older cleaner bowed his head.

“I-I’m really sorry. We will finish it as soon as possible.”

“Yes, yes. Make sure you handle it. Kim Soo-bin still has one arm left; however, the schedule is tight, so she has to be done soon. Make sure you tie her up so that she’s unable to move.”

“Yes. I’ll make sure she can’t life even one finger.”

“Phew, I’ll trust you this time...”

Dr. J sighed and exited.

The youth asked the older cleaner who was still bowing.

“He is the doctor?”

“Yes, that is him. Remember the person in charge here.”

“Wah... The atmosphere isn't a joke.”

“I heard he is one of the top three experts in China. Don't rile him up because I don't know what he would do.”

“Yes. But I am wondering one thing. Why are the limbs being cut off?”

“That's to prevent the doctor from being hit with an arm or leg during the surgery. They're sold for surprisingly high prices to collectors. Moreover, did you see yesterday's news?”

“Yes.”

“Dr. J has a really fantastic mind. He used the parts that were thrown away to fake a mutilation murder case. Recently, there was a police officer sniffing around the missing children.”

At that moment, the firmly closed door opened and Dr. J entered. He quietly approached the older cleaner and sliced his neck with a scalpel.

“K... Keook...”

Blood sprayed out from the older cleaner’s mouth. Dr. J cleaned the blood from his hand and took out a cigarette before asking,

“What did I say? I told you to watch your mouth. Hey, Newbie.”

“Yes? Yes!”

The youth froze with surprise before replying.

“Now you’re the main cleaner, and your salary will double. Have you learned everything about the job?”

The youth smiled at the promotion and replied,

“I know everything.”

“Then prepare that one. His body is rotten, but there might be a part that can be used.”

Dr. J smoked his cigarette as he laid the man on the operating table and started working. After finishing everything, the doctor



said,

“There is one more in the afternoon so keep it clean. And remember to watch your mouth.”

“I understand. Doctor.”

After finishing the cleaning, the young man went to eat. The menu was beef tripe and intestine soup.

---

Kim Soo-bin stared at the firmly closed door in the darkness.

Every time it was opened, one person in this room would be dragged out, never to come back. What happened to them? She didn't want to imagine it, but it absolutely wasn't a good thing.

Even with her eyes that had become accustomed to darkness, she could only dimly see the outline of body.

Kim Soo-bin hugged her trembling body.

When she woke up, one arm had disappeared. Unfortunately, the even sadder thing was that she lost the token of promise that she shared with her only friend. The token she treasured on her little finger...

Tears suddenly poured down.

Kim Soo-bin was a child who didn't receive any love from an early age. Her mother left the house. Her only remaining family, her father, saw her mother in Kim Soo-bin and abused her every day. In the end, she left the house and wandered the streets, committing all types of dirty actions such as shoplifting.

It felt like paradise didn't exist. In the end, the police picked her up at a crime scene and she was taken to a facility. Life there wasn't much different. She was stamped with the stigma of a criminal so the eyes of the adults were cold. If anything happened then she was suspected and beaten.

Just as she became resigned to suffering for eternity, Song Hye-mi appeared. The two people, who resembled each other so much so that it was like looking in a mirror, instantly became friends.

‘I want to be happy.’

For the first time, that thought appeared in Kim Soo-bin's mind. On that day, Kim Soo-bin was reborn. She didn't do anything bad anymore and worked hard to develop her skills. She wanted to live with Song Hye-mi as soon as she left the orphanage. If she stretched out her hand, then she thought she could catch the happiness that she craved.

But then she was kidnapped by unidentified people.

Ddubeok...

At that time, Kim Soo-bin heard someone's footsteps. She was the only one remaining in this room. Was it finally her turn?

She had constantly wished that someone would save her. However, when she was kidnapped, and when her arm was cut off, nobody came to her rescue.

‘Maybe someone is coming to save me...’

Kim Soo-bin didn't abandon hope until the end. This couldn't be over. She had a promise to keep.

-Let's be happy together.

Then the door opened. Kim Soo-bin's face distorted as she confirmed the appearance of the person.

That man. The man who cut off her arm.

“Aha, ahahaha! Be glad. It's finally your turn. Now you'll be able to live while surrounded by luxurious furniture. You can now eat all types of delicious foods, and be able to meet and have a loving relationship with a nice person. You'll now be able to spend your days in happiness.”

Kim Soo-bin understood what the man's words meant. It wasn't

the happiness that she wanted.

“S-Spare me. I’ll do anything... P-Plea... Oof!”

The young cleaner standing behind Dr. J covered Kim Soo-bin’s mouth. Kim Soo-bin struggled desperately to avoid being dragged. Then Dr. J clicked his tongue and muttered,

“I should’ve had someone cut off the remaining arm in advance. I’ve been too busy these days. The death of one of you will bring happiness to over 10 people. Don’t you think that is much better than living a tragic life?”

Dr. J stroked Kim Soo-bin’s head like he was complimenting her. Then slowly, he injected an anesthetic into her neck. Kim Soo-bin’s struggling body instantly relaxed.

“Cleaner, pick her up. I didn’t want to use this to maintain the freshness. Still, it couldn’t be helped. It wasn’t a strong dose so even if she doesn’t move, her consciousness will still remain.”

“Yes. I’ve done all the preparations, doctor.”

Dr. J nodded with a satisfied expression.

“You are quiet in comparison to your predecessor.”

The cleaner carried Kim Soo-bin and headed to the operating

room.

Dr. J said quietly,

“Be careful. That girl you are carrying is worth 1.5 billion won.”

The scalp, artery, liver, gallbladder, kidneys, blood, skin, eyes, teeth, shoulders, heart, spleen, stomach, small intestines... Every single one of those organs were worth valuable money that couldn't be abandoned. Even at the last minute, Kim Soo-bin was constantly thinking,

‘I'm sorry... Hye-mi... I couldn't keep my promise...’

---

Tae-hyuk looked at T Medical Center from a distance.

It seemed like an ordinary hospital, but there was something wicked and nefarious was happening in its basement. He wanted to blow it up.

‘It would be great if I was a bomber.’

The important thing was justification. Tae-hyuk planned to inform the mass media about the existence of Phantom through the Doll Play event. In order to do this, Shin Se-ho the PD had been steadily preparing.

‘First of all, I have to capture what is happening here on camera. And...’

He took the opera mask out of his bag. Then he felt calm as if cold water had been poured over him. The opera mask had a specially made micro camera installed in it. Everything that Tae-hyuk saw and heard would be recorded in FHD. After he collected all the evidence, he was going to use ‘it’ in his bag.

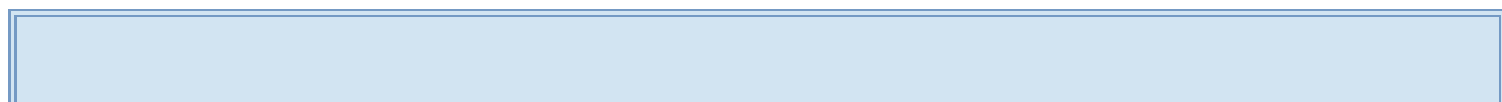
He couldn’t enter the basement area through the front door of the hospital, and had to pass through several gates in order to get there. Tae-hyuk went over the barbed wire and headed to the back door of T Medical Center.

However, a security guard came running out of nowhere.

“I’m sorry but this place is off-limits.”

It seemed like the building had several CCTV cameras that weren’t visible from the outside. Through it, they noticed the presence of a trespasser. In addition, he was carrying a big bag with no weapons.

The guard waved the rod at Tae-hyuk, threatening him so that he would leave. Tae-hyuk laughed. It was funny that the guard would threaten him with such a confident face.



[Violence has been used.]

-Can use iron pipes.

Tae-hyuk narrowed the distance to his opponent at once and swung the iron pipe at the opponent's head.

“Kuak!”

The security guard fell to the ground. Tae-hyuk registered his voice in the Demon Revealing Mirror. Now he could use the Voice Modulation skill with no problem.

“First I have to put him in a corner.”

Tae-hyuk tied up the guard and brought him to a place that wasn't visible, then checked his belongings. There was the pass badge, rod, radio, phone, etc. Unfortunately, the badge's security clearance was low so he couldn't go into the basement.

However, they would still be fairly useful. The atmosphere was important in this type of work.

Tae-hyuk muttered to the radio that was off.

“Phantom is here. From now on, I will enter the enemy camp.”

## Chapter 80 – Phantom Opens His Eyes #2

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“Then where are the kidnapped children trapped?”

It was good to know about the secret area but the problem was that he needed to find the children in order to rescue them. According to Big Mama’s research, T Medical Center was connected to the Chinese mafia. There were security guards armed with rods and a radio outside, but what about inside? There was a need to move as carefully as possible.

Tae-hyuk pulled out a sketchbook and a pencil from his bag.

“Well, not knowing something won’t stop me.”

Because he had to use several skills, Tae-hyuk adjusted the Demon Revealing Mirror. His abilities were shown.

[Seo Tae-hyuk]

-Title: God of Crime

-Rating: Commoner (Lacking conditions for upgrade)

-Skills Possessed: Robbery, Voice Modulation, Spying, Counterfeit, Forgery, Gambling and Violence.



Stats: Stamina (58), Intelligence (50), Agility (34), Dexterity (46)

The bombing case had significantly increased his agility and dexterity. Furthermore, he studied with An Eun-young constantly for the end of year tests and his intelligence reached the required 50 points for the upgrade.

The compensation for solving this case was 10 blacklist points and 20 stat points. He could instantly upgrade to Noble rank.

The crime skills that Tae-hyuk had were strengthened by the affinity points.

After invoking Robbery, he had three seconds to select what he wanted to steal. Spying could expand its range once a day, and it also had the ability to project the Demon Revealing Mirror in the air. In order to increase the utilization of Forgery, he bought a trait that increased production speed.

Tae-hyuk's heart started to beat faster as he checked the abilities that he had gained in half a year. He could use all of this to make ridiculous things happen. Soon, they would be strengthened even further.

In order to do that, he needed a map of this place. He used the trick that he used in Atlantis.

[The Spying skill has been used.]

-The Expand Range attribute allows you to explore a larger terrain.

-You can draw a map of this place using the Forgery skill.

(Y/N)

Crime skills linkage! Through it, impossible things became possible.

Tae-hyuk completed drawing in the sketchbook in an instant.

“Oh, complete!”

Looking at the completed work was the best source of happiness for an artist. Now a map of T Medical Center was drawn in his sketchbook. It seemed that he would be able to enter the strictly guarded places with this new map.

“...Moonlight Flower would be upset and jealous if she saw this skill.”

Let's take a look at the map of this structure. The children were being held in B2. One problem was that he had to pass through the most difficult gateway to get there, but the biggest problem was

that the stairs didn't go straight. In order to go to the next floor, he had to take the passage on the other side.

‘Of course, there's a CCTV camera in every corridor. There are also a lot of security guards.’

The basement was complicated like a maze. The reason was simple.

‘If anyone is lucky enough to escape then they won't be able to get out.’

Tae-hyuk remembered that the structure of the prison was also like this. The prison memories that popped into his head were truly unpleasant.

‘I am worried that someone unrelated to Doll Play will get involved. It is useless. When I think about it, aren't even the cleaners accomplices? At the very least, they know what they are cleaning up.’

As Tae-hyuk made a plan to infiltrate, the radio started making a noise.

–It is the regular reporting time. Is anything wrong?

At the moment, Tae-hyuk's mind came up with a plan.

---

[Voice Modulation has been used.]

-You can imitate the voice of Kyung Bi-won.

“There is nothing wrong. However, there is smoke coming out from the vents. Are there any problems in the basement?”

Then a cough was heard from the radio.

–Cough! Really? I guess I should check it out. You have a little bit of time left on your shift so keep an eye out. There is one more work in the afternoon.

“I understand. Keep up the good work.”

Tae-hyuk shrugged and pressed the button on the radio. Of course, it was an absolute lie. But from now on, the security guards would desperately be trying to find out where the smoke was coming from.

What would happen if he lit a real fire in the meantime? Of course, a huge mess would occur.

Tae-hyuk muttered as he looked at the boiler room on the map.

“No matter how fierce the guards are, I will create a big crack.”

---

The boiler room was outside for ventilation. There were dozens of hundred liter drums that were responsible for heating the entire building. After one was used, it would be recycled to take care of the bodies.

It was a place that had to be strictly managed, but there was only one person in charge of it. He was sitting on a chair and sleeping with empty soju bottles on the floor. Tae-hyuk tied up the boiler room manager with a rope and gagged him. Despite that, there were no signs of him waking up. It seemed like he could even sleep through a bomb explosion.

Dung dung!

Tae-hyuk found an empty drum and installed a bomb there. It was the most sensitive one he had, so it would explode if there was even a small shock. He hid it between drums containing oil.

He opened the lids of the other drums and placed military grade tear gas inside. Any man who was in the army would be very familiar with it. Taking one sip would make them feel the pain of falling into hell.

‘I don’t have a gas mask so I’ll have to struggle as I’m going inside.’

He mixed all the smoke bombs he had with tear gas as well. This

would fill the place with a special smoke made from tear gas and smoke bombs. On the surface, it would look like a fire in the boiler room. His work went smoothly, due to the 40 points in dexterity.

Tae-hyuk made a satisfied expression and headed for B2.

“Huhu... It is a mess.”

The building seemed to be in half emergency mode. People dressed as security guards were frantically running around. It wouldn't be good to encounter them. Tae-hyuk grabbed the iron pipe and held his breath as he hid inside the vents.

–Where is the smoke coming from?

He heard an urgent voice over the radio.

Tae-hyuk deliberately replied in a trembling voice,

“Ah, it seems to be the boiler room.”

–F-Fuck... What the hell is the manager doing? I understand. Continue to report on the situation.

After a while, a bunch of security guards ran out of the building. There were also personnel from T Medical Center who managed the power.

“Then shall I enter the empty house?”

It would take around 10 minutes for the guards to find out that the boiler room wasn't on fire. Before that, he had to collect the evidence and save the children trapped in B2. He couldn't delay for even one second.

Tae-hyuk exited the vent and headed to B2. The structure was the same as the first basement floor. There was a corridor and rooms with windows.

However, the mood changed. It was like sticky death was stuck to the soles of his feet. There was a groaning sound, as if there was an injured animal somewhere.

“Hrmm. There is a drum.”

It was sitting in the middle of the corridor. The person who was moving it probably rushed out due to the fire in the boiler room. Tae-hyuk gathered his courage and beat the drum.

A sound was heard. It was filled with something, and it wasn't oil. Tae-hyuk carefully opened the firmly closed lid. A smoke with an unpleasant smell emerged.

Sulfuric acid. Tae-hyuk was careful not to breathe in the toxic gas as he confirmed what was inside. The thing that was melting inside...

---

Tae-hyuk caught the reality of T Medical Center through the camera installed in the opera mask.

The evidence within was more than what he had initially imagined. Cutting a person's body without proper anesthesia. People were raised like livestock until a suitable match was found.

Tae-hyuk's heart calmed like a frozen lake.

It was anger.

The doctors of T Medical Center didn't regard those here as human.

'Wasn't there a surgery scheduled for this afternoon?'

Tae-hyuk headed to the operating room that was in the deepest part of B2. Once he opened the door, he saw the tragedy happening within. A naked girl was tied on top of the table in the operating room. It was Kim Soo-bin who Song Hye-mi had been searching for.

Dr J. stopped the hands that were cutting into her body and looked back. Their eyes met. The first one to open his mouth was Dr. J.

"What?"



“I’m sorry for interrupting you. I am just a criminal passing by.”

“Criminal?”

“Yes. From now on, I plan to blow up this place.”

“What...?”

Dr. J looked at him with an absurd expression. A man wearing a strange mask was saying funny words. He didn’t know how the man got in here, but he seemed to be crazy. Dr. J put down the scalpel he was holding and picked up a radio.

“This is the doctor. How are you doing your jobs? There is a strange person...”

Tae-hyuk smiled and slammed the iron pipe down on Dr. J’s head, causing him to instantly collapse onto the ground.

“D-Doctor!”

Oh Shil-jang, the cleaner, screamed from where he was holding Kim Soo-bin’s body. He pulled out a gun from his pocket and aimed at Tae-hyuk.

“Drop your weapon now! Before a bullet enters your head!”

“You seem confident now that you have the gun. Isn’t it incomplete though?”

“What?”

“It means that no one would be scared of a gun that isn’t loaded with bullets.”

Oh Shil-jang’s face distorted. It was the right answer. The first time he had held a gun was one hour ago. The confused Oh Shil-jang looked into the muzzle.

“I’m sorry but that was a lie.”

Tae-hyuk hit the opponent’s hand with his pipe. There was a loud noise as Oh Shil-jang fell to the ground.

“Tsk tsk. You should always pay attention to the direction of the muzzle.”

Tae-hyuk clicked his tongue as he released Kim Soo-bin from the operating table. Her condition was bad. One arm was cut off, and there was a scar on her body that would never be erased. But she was still alive.

“Kim Soo-bin?”

“.....”

Kim Soo-bin looked up at Tae-hyuk with eyes glazed from the anesthetic. It seemed like she couldn't tell if this was a dream or reality. Tae-hyuk slapped Kim Soo-bin's cheeks.

“...W-What? Why is this pers... Kyaaaaak!”

Kim Soo-bin screamed as she regained her bearings. A man's head had been blown away in front of her.

“If you've regained your consciousness then somehow get up. I'm sorry but there is no time.”

“...Are you here to save me?”

“It is just a bonus, but in the end I guess so.”

“B-Bonu...”

Kim Soo-bin staggered as she desperately got down from the operating table. Fortunately, her legs were fine. She suddenly realized that she was naked. Her one arm was unable to hide all of her body.

Kim Soo-bin said with a stutter.

“I-In a situation like this, shouldn’t you usually take off your clothes?”

“I’m sorry but I’m not a gentleman.”

Tae-hyuk smiled before handing over Oh Shil-jang’s coat. He handed it to Kim Soo-bin, despite the blood dripping on it. He wanted her to wear clothes from an unidentified white lump?

“T-This...”

“If you don’t like it then don’t wear it.”

Kim Soo-bin was forced to wear Oh Shil-jang’s clothes.

“I’ll just ask you one thing. Do you know how many children are left?”

Kim Soo-bin replied in a cracked voice,

“Maybe five people are left. I don’t know exactly, but I am sure that they are locked up here.”

“Really? We will get them and then escape from here. Kim Soo-bin. Will you help me?”

Kim Soo-bin’s eyes widened as the man who saved her asked for

her help. But this man was the only one she could trust.

“Yes, I will help.”

“Yes. Thank you.”

“Wait a minute. What should I call you?”

Kim Soo-bin saw a soft smile appear on the face of the man wearing the opera mask and inwardly sighed with relief. She didn't know his identity but he didn't seem like a bad guy.

“You mean me? I am called Phantom.”

“Phantom?”

“Yes.”

“Are you someone like a police officer or detective?”

Tae-hyuk laughed,

“I'm sorry but I'm not such a great person. At best, I am just a criminal.”

“But you saved me. Ah, I see. Are you a criminal who judges other criminals?”

“Hah, that’s right.”

Tae-hyuk and Kim Soo-bin moved out of the operating room to save the other children.

## Chapter 81 – Phantom Opens His Eyes #3

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The guards standing outside the smoking boiler room were afraid to move.

“Someone go in and check it out!”

“There’s too much smoke to go in!”

“If the oil catches on fire then we’ll all die!”

The chief, who was responsible for managing the security guards, raised his voice. However, he couldn’t think of a plausible solution. One of the guards stammered out,

“C-Chief. Wouldn’t it be better to report it to the Fire Department?”

The chief’s face distorted.

“What did you just say? Do you know how complicated it would become if firefighters came here? They would go everywhere like cockroaches. We aren’t playing house right now!”

The security guard trembled. What would happen if it was known that they were trafficking body organs here?

Most of the directors and members belonged to the Chinese

mafia. Even if they were caught, there were many avenues of escape. What would happen to the guards who did their dirty work? These days, scapegoats were always necessary. His death would be disguised as a suicide after confessing to all of the crimes.

The smoke coming from the boiler room was literally horrible. Just breathing in a little of it would cause water to leak out from their bodies.

“Fuck, what type of fire would cause smoke like this?”

It was the special product of the army but the chief of the bodyguards were unaware of this fact.

“This will stop any toxic gases.”

One smart security guard dipped water on a towel to create a gas mask. The chief’s expression brightened.

“Really? Then go inside and check where the fire is coming from. Others will go into the building and get the fire extinguishers. I think we can put out the fire between us.”

“I-I am going inside?”

“Then should I be going in?”

“Ah, no.”



In the end, the security guard who made the gas mask was forced to enter. He didn't have the guts to refuse the command. He blocked his mouth and nose with the towel and boldly ran into the smoke.

“Cough... Cough!”

However, it wasn't enough to stop all of the teargas. The chief clicked his tongue as he heard the guard coughing painfully.

“If you are going to make it then you should do it properly.”

How much time passed? The black smoke was coming out of a large drum. The amazing thing was that no matter how much he looked, the smoke really was coming from the drum barrel.

“Here it is. This is the source of the smoke... Cough! Cough!”

The chief looked at what the security guard brought out.

“Then it wasn't a fire...?”

Several guards blocked their mouths and looked at the drum and the hidden trick was found.

“I don't think it's poison gas. It feels like somebody mixed a smoke bomb with something else.

“Who the hell did th...”

At that moment, something popped into the chief’s head.

“...Wait a minute. Who’s left inside the building now?”

“It was an urgent situation so I think most of our forces are here.”

The face of the chief distorted after hearing the answer and pulled out the gun hanging from his waist.

“It seems like we fell into a trap. The hostages are in danger.”

The armed security guards entered the building.

The time spent was exactly 10 minutes, like Tae-hyuk predicted.

---

“It should be time for the guards to come back.”

Soo-bin’s face paled as she heard Phantom’s words.

“W-What should we do? Everybody can’t move properly...”

Soo-bin looked at the condition of the rescued children. All of them had lost a body part and couldn't move properly. There were only four people who were saved.

The rest...

Phantom carried a boy missing a leg and said,

“Do you know Second Generation Suffering?”

“Ah...”

Soo-bin understood Phantom's words.

It was a famous novel. A man who fought in Japan lost his arm and returned home, only for his son to lose his leg to a hand grenade. The two people worried about each other and supported each other with what they were each lacking.

“I marked the escape route on the map. If you follow this then you will be able to get out of the building. Once outside, call the number already registered on this phone and a man will come to save you.”

Kim Soo-bin nodded. Suddenly, she realized that Phantom was missing from the escape plan.

“Phantom won't be escaping?”

“I still have work to do.”

Kim Soo-bin asked,

“Aren’t you here to save us?”

“I told you. You are a bonus.”

Phantom seemed to know what Kim Soo-bin was worried about. She was afraid that they would be caught again when escaping.

Phantom spoke quietly to Soo-bin,

“Don’t worry. I will stop the security guards.”

“T-That’s not...”

Soo-bin tried to say something else but he swiftly turned away. Then she looked at Phantom who was leaving and asked,

“Can I meet you again?”

“That would be hard.”

“That, I would like to reward you for rescuing...”

Phantom laughed,

“I’m sorry but I am expensive. You don’t have enough money to satisfy me.”

“I-I wasn’t planning to give you money. J-Just my sincerity.”

“If there is anything like that then give it to Song Hye-mi. It was that child who moved me.”

“H-Hye-mi?”

Phantom spoke some final words as he headed down to 2B.

“Remember that you are alive because there was someone who wanted to fight against fate. Every single second and every single minute that you are alive is a miracle. So live well, Kim Soo-bin.”

Kim Soo-bin realized that it was the best encouragement that Phantom could give. She was a orphan who no one cared about, and now she was even missing one arm.

But...

She survived. She was breathing. She could hug Hye-mi once again.

Phantom disappeared from in front of her. Tears streamed from Soo-bin's eyes.

The five kidnapped children survived the hell called T Medical Center.

---

[5 affinity points have been acquired.]

[You can use the affinity points to enhance crime skills or activate hidden attributes.]

Tae-hyuk looked at the Demon Revealing Mirror. Fortunately, the five children seemed to have made it out unharmed.

‘I have goose bumps... Now that there is no one to hear, I can stop using Voice Modulation.’

He had used Kim Bum-soo's voice in order to hide his identity. The side effect of speaking with such a dignified tone appeared. Tae-hyuk decided to strengthen his combat ability with the points he just gained.

‘There is a bomb but I don't know what will happen. Wouldn't it be nice to have insurance?’

Violence. There were a few attributes that could be raised.

He could have the killing intent of a person who fought for their whole lives. There was also having a sixth sense about how the enemy will attack when they were near him. He could deal tremendous power with one strike. Finally, at the end of the fighting, he could see the optimal attack route.

Those were the attributes available with the Violence skill.

Tae-hyuk picked ‘Sixth Sense’ to detect the opponent’s attack.

‘It happens to be exactly five points.’

[Crime Skill: Violence has gained a new attribute.]

[‘Sixth Sense’, the ability to read your opponent’s attack has been acquired.]

[The range of the Spying skill has increased.]

Tae-hyuk sighed with relief as he safely gained the attribute. The detection range seemed to be around two to three meters.

‘Does this mean I will have no rivals in close combat?’

How much stronger would he become if he was a Noble? Tae-hyuk got goosebumps.

‘Well. They are coming.’

A bunch of people running could be seen at the end of the corridor. There was no need to use a skill.

“...The children have disappeared!”

“W-What the?”

Standing at the front of the crowd was Chief Park, a former mixed martial arts athlete.

“Chief Park! I think he is the culprit!”

Someone shouted as they discovered Tae-hyuk.

‘Four out of the 10 people have guns.’

They were abnormally armed due to receiving the support of the triad. He was able to see how much was invested into this place.

‘Sheesh. I don’t want to be killed by a bullet. I’ll have to use it here.’



He just wanted to test the power of the new attribute he just learned but the situation wasn't good. Tae-hyuk cried out to the incoming guards,

“Stop.”

“What are you saying? You should be the one worried. First, I will tear out your eyes and then slice you up while you are alive. Everyone...”

Tae-hyuk pointed his finger towards the people running.

“Fire.”

Then he literally threw his body onto the floor.

Peeeeeeong!

The bomb he installed in advance exploded and huge flames emerged.

Kukukung!

Half of B2 disappeared.

Tae-hyuk had lowered his body as much as possible to minimize

the impact of the explosion and muttered.

“What did I say? I told you to stop.”

Looking again, it truly contained enormous power. This was the weakest of the bombs that the Bomber made. Otherwise, the entire building would've collapsed.

“Then there is one bomb left.”

Tae-hyuk muttered as he looked at the box in his bag.

---

“Keuk... T-This bastard...”

Most of the guards were alive despite being blown away by the explosion. Of course, that didn't mean they were fine. At least one place on their bodies was broken.

Tae-hyuk, who was covered in dirt, walked over to the guards.

“Did you enjoy the appetizer? Ah right, I'll say it again but you better not approach me carelessly. There is a bomb that is 100 times stronger here.”

“K-Kuheok!”

The guards groaned as Tae-hyuk tapped his bag.

“It looks like you are the boss. I will take the chief with me. Come along.”

“W-Where are you taking Chief-nim?”

“Yes. If you don’t like it then you can stay here. This guy will explode soon.”

The guards trembled. The power of the bomb that just exploded was huge, but 100 times that? The building itself would disappear.

Tae-hyuk walked to the chairman’s office on the second floor with a relaxed expression. He was followed by the wounded security guards. Their current number wasn’t even half of their original state. The crime prevention device that obstructed the path was resolved by a pass that Chief Park had.

The chairman of T Medical Center was sitting on a chair in the luxurious office and talking to someone. It was an executive from the triads, Yang Wei, who pulled out a gun and aimed at Tae-hyuk.

“I’ve never seen this face before. What do you want?”

Yang Wei saw the bloody guards behind Tae-hyuk. Tae-hyuk shrugged and replied,

“If you have ears then you would’ve heard the explosion just before.

“What did you do?” (Spoken in Chinese)

Chinese flowed from the mouth of the confused Yang Wei.

Tae-hyuk laughed and said,

“You must have heard on the news that a bombing occurred recently.”

“D-Don’t tell me...”

“Yes. For reference, the one that just exploded is the weakest of my bombs. Ah right. You can shoot me if you want. Then they will instantly explode.”

“Bullshit!” (Chinese)

Yang Wei got up from his chair and yelled.

The whole building had shaken from the previous explosion. Yet there was a stronger bomb?

“Speak Korean. I don’t understand.”

“...What do you want? Are you an assassin sent from Heavenly Supremacy?”

“Ding! I am sent from the Mary Convent.”

It was the first time Yang Wei heard of that organization.

“You shouldn’t think too hard. It is an orphanage.”

Yang Wei’s face distorted as he realized Tae-hyuk’s purpose. They had deliberately kidnapped orphans since no one cared about them. Yet there happened to be a bodyguard.

Yang Wei shouted with his expression still distorted.

“W-Will you go quietly if I give them to you? I-I will also give you money.”

“Don’t think that I am a bad person. I haven’t come to kill you. I’m just going to play a simple game.”

“Game?”

Tae-hyuk sat down on a chair in the corner of the office.

“I’ll give you exactly 10 minutes. Gather all of the officials here. It is exactly 10 minutes. Not 9 minutes, nor 11 minutes. If they are

even one minute late, then the bomb will explode and this building will fly away.

“Kuk!”

Tae-hyuk was the one holding the knife and Yang Wei was forced to quietly follow his order.

“Then I will ask you one last thing. What is the game?”

Tae-hyuk smiled and replied,

“Doll Play.”

## Chapter 82 – Phantom Opens His Eyes #4

---

20 people gathered in a large operating room, with more than half of them being Chinese. They were dark doctors belonging to the triad. They knew that a bomb was installed in T Medical Center so their expressions weren't so good.

“Bomb... Is it really installed here?”

“I heard an explosion before.”

“Crazy!” (Chinese)

Various Chinese voices were heard in the room. In the meantime, the security guards, who were mostly Koreans, talked among each other.

“If we shoot them then will that guy spare our lives?”

“Let's just watch the situation. Still, surely he won't kill fellow Koreans.”

The faces of the security guards were relaxed. It seemed like they thought the culprit couldn't kill fellow Koreans.

Beep!

A large monitor in the centre of the operating room turned on

and a man wearing an opera mask appeared on the screen.

“T-That person...”

“He is the culprit that installed the bomb here!”

“That bastard...!”

Phantom bowed towards the people gathered in the operating room.

-Hello. First of all, I will tell you two things. In 120 minutes, all the bombs installed in this building will explode.

“W-What?!”

“L-Listen! Aren’t we both Koreans? Spare us, please!”

Several guards grabbed the surveillance camera and started begging. However, Phantom’s expression didn’t change.

-I’d like to ask what made you so anxious. You don’t have to worry, as I don’t want to kill anyone.

Sighs of relief were heard.

-Kukukuk. I’m sorry but I am a liar.



“T-Then you will kill all of us...!”

–Think about it slowly. I gathered all of you in order to play a game. The rules are very simple. In the meantime, you people have done this.

The screen switched to something hanging in the ledger room.

–You should be familiar with this image. These are the prices for each body part on the black market.

One heart is 130 million won.

A kidney is 300 million.

An eye is 170 million...

Everyone who works here will see this list every day.

“W-What game are we playing with it?”

–Yang Wei said that he would pay money if I spared his life. Does everybody agree with this?

“O-Of course! I will pay however much you want, just please spare me...”

If they paid then they could live. The people started begging Phantom again to spare their lives.

-I want a sum of three billion.

“Ah...”

The guards slumped down at such a huge amount, but light filled the eyes of the doctors. They could pay three billion won. Rather, they felt that was cheap compared to the value of their lives. So far, they had cut apart hundreds of people and earned tens of billions of won in profit in a year. If they thought about it, that was very affordable.

-Of course, I won't receive it as money.

“Huh? T-Then what?”

-You should be very familiar with them.

“D-Don't tell me... Our body parts?”

-You noticed pretty quickly. The rule is very simple and the time limit is two hours. In the meantime, use the things in this room to produce three billion won worth of products. Of course, it doesn't matter who it belongs to. For reference, they should be able to be implanted in others.

“I-It will be hard to make three billion won with the current international market value!”

One doctor shrieked,

–I will give 10 million won for one arm or leg. Oh, don’t you guys hate anesthesia? So I specifically removed all anesthesia from the room. Of course, the other tools are all intact so there won’t be any problems with the surgery. Then, I hope you manage it.

Phantom turned off the monitor and there was an uproar in the operating room.

“Three billion won is ridiculous!”

“Ha, ha, ha... A joke? Why are you looking...”

“Jump on that bastard! If we kill one person then 500 million won will come out. Then only three people need to die!”

They spread out and started trying to kill each other. However, there were those who tried to resist.

“D-Don’t kill! If we die then surgery is impossible!”

“I can take it out roughly!”

“Aaaaack!”

Obviously, Phantom had stated that it should be able to be transplanted. However, they couldn't think of such things as madness filled their heads.

They had to kill others in order to live. Yang Wei muttered to himself as he shot the head of a security guard trying to kill him.

“He obviously gave a choice to everyone. But eventually this will happen. Phantom... Really scary.”

And the throat of Yang Wei was sliced with a doctor's scalpel.

---

Tae-hyuk recovered the bomb installed in the boiler room and muttered,

“I would be crazy to use one more bomb.”

In fact, he almost died using one to escape the guards underground. Therefore he never intended to use this bomb.

“Now, let's see. There are two more left.”

One bomb was recovered safely. The last one had such

tremendous destructive power that he didn't even bring it in the first place.

“In the end, there was one more condition for Doll Play.”

Three billion won worth of organs and body parts. At least half of them had to give up their lives. However, if they didn't do anything and waited then everyone could live.

It was a hidden condition using the criminal's dilemma.

Tae-hyuk called himself a liar. He only said one lie, which was that a bomb would go off two hours later.

“If there was a good person among them then they might have noticed the trick.”

Tae-hyuk muttered quietly,

“Then I'll pray for you. I hope you survive.”

Tae-hyuk placed the bomb in his bag and quietly left. A scream seemed to be heard from somewhere.

---

“Son of a bitch... What type of human would do this?”

Kim Soo-bin safely escaped from hell and was able to receive treatment at the hospital. However, her arm had been cut off a week ago so it couldn't be helped.

After a few days, she was able to talk about the incident with Detective Cho Kang-suk.

“Detective Cho Kang-suk, thank you for coming to see me. That is all I know.”

“Y-Yes... I'm sorry that I had to ask you this.”

“It's okay. I know that it is a detective's job.”

Kang-suk's heart was burning.

He knew the hard life that the child on this bed had lived. Moreover, her life would be even harder in the future. But there was nothing that Kang-suk could do. All he could do was introduce a social worker whom he knew well.

Even so, he had to keep asking questions and reminding her of what happened. It was the first time that he hated his job as a detective.

“By the way, he was called Phantom? He rescued you?”

“Yes. Do you know the Phantom of the Opera? It's a musical that

I went to see when I was at the orphanage. He wore the same mask as the protagonist.”

“God of Crime...”

“I’m sorry but I don’t know his face.”

“It’s okay. I’m not disappointed. Well, that is it for today.”

Kang-suk got up from his seat and Soo-bin desperately tried to stop him. However, she only had one arm so she fell back on the bed.

“Can’t you stay a bit more? I hate being alone.”

“...Brat.”

Kang-suk patted Soo-bin’s head.

“Yes? The food here is delicious. Eat lunch before leaving.”

“Isn’t it better for Hye-mi to eat the food?”

“H-Hye-mi?”

“Yes. She said she would die if she couldn’t come visit now. I am going to pick up Hye-mi.”

“Ah...”

Soo-bin looked at Kang-suk with a touched expression. He was different from other detectives, and felt more like a dad than a detective.

Ddrrrung!

It was a call from Kim Do-shik. Kang-suk left the room and spoke quietly so that Soo-bin couldn't hear.

“Ah, Inspector. I've finished listening to the victim. I will write up the report later in the afternoon.”

–Detective Cho. Is there a TV near you right now? Turn to ABS Station and watch. Crazy fucker. That bastard appeared.

“Huh?”

–The crazy bastard who is a criminal.

“P-Phantom appeared on TV?”

–Yes. Don't just ask questions, watch the TV!

A few days ago, Phantom announced the hippo case that they had



been concealed from the public. Since then, the prosecutors had been searching for Phantom. But a TV appearance? Furthermore, it was ABS Station that spread the truth of the hippo case. They had said that Phantom threatened them with a bomb and it couldn't be helped. The clean-up from that situation still wasn't over.

“D-Did you say Phantom?”

Kim Soo-bin asked in a trembling voice. Cho Kang-suk had shouted so loudly that it entered Kim Soo-bin's ears.

“It seems like it.”

“The TV remote control... Ah, here it is! I'll play it right away.”

A man wearing a Pandora mask appeared on TV.

“Pfff! What? That mask makes no sense.”

“.....”

Phantom made exaggerated gestures like it was a play.

–People.

This is the whole story of the incident at T Medical Centre. They

kidnapped weak children and took their lives. Therefore, I judged them. I'm sure you are all angry after hearing the horrible truth. Some people will think they died well. But don't forget. You are also an accomplice. 100 children went missing, but was there even one person who cared about their disappearance? The missing reports were ignored. Rather, there were more people who were excited about their deaths because they could survive.

This is the reality. Not one person tried to save the children, so I moved. I did it – I, Phantom. A criminal who judges other criminals!

---

The video quickly spread throughout the country. The appearance of a horrible crime scene without a mosaic produced many controversies. The Phantom's appearance in front of the public became the top story in the media for a while.

Shin Se-ho, the only journalist who Phantom contacted, received love calls from numerous media. In the end, he had a contract with ABS Station and decided to honor it until the end.

The newly appointed police commissioner gave an order to everyone.

“Get that crazy criminal right now! It doesn't matter how much manpower has to be committed! God of Crime? Phantom? He might think of himself as a hero, but he is just a self-conscious child!”

Eventually, the whole country was calling for Phantom. No one knew the identity of the man wearing the opera mask. The universities started practicing Phantom of the Opera, and more than 100,000 copies of the Phantom mask were sold in a day. Psychologists appeared on TV and talked about masks and personas. There were people who claimed that Phantom knocked on their doors.

Phantom, the God of Crime, became the new trend.

What was Phantom doing now? That was the only thing the country was interested in.

But Tae-hyuk was actually making tteokbokki in the kitchen. Ha-ran invited Kim Soo-bin to their house to celebrate her discharge.

“The food she wanted to eat was tteokbokki...”

Cho Kang-suk had announced with a serious face. Seo Ha-ran also invited Song Hye-mi.

Tae-hyuk laughed,

“...By the way. Why haven't I received the reward yet? Is the Demon Revealing Mirror broken?”

He had roughly solved the case but there was no news about the rewards.

Ding dong!

Brr!

There were two sounds at the same time.

“Tae-hyuk! Did you wait long? I was a bit late due to buying a cake!”

Seo Ha-ran was carrying a cake box on the porch. She was followed by Song Hye-mi and Kim Soo-bin.

“Hello?”

“Excuse me!”

“Hyung has come! Eh? Tae-hyuk. Why are you looking like that? Don’t you want to see Hyung?”

Tae-hyuk was acting like this due to the message that suddenly rose on the Demon Revealing Mirror.

[The Doll Play mission has been accomplished.]

-10 blacklist points have been acquired.

-20 stat points have been acquired.

[All conditions are fulfilled and you can upgrade to 'Noble',]

– If you become a Noble, you can gain a wider variety of crime skills.

-Some skills will evolve to a higher tier if the conditions are met.

[Do you want to upgrade to a Noble status?]

– Y/N

Tae-hyuk quietly reached out his hand.

## Chapter 83 – I Am A Noble #1

---

[You have been promoted to Noble.]

[Crime Skill: Bomb Manufacturing has been learnt.]

[Crime Skill: Torture has been learnt.]

[Crime Skill: Illegal Surgery has been learnt.]

After Tae-hyuk was promoted to a Noble, notification messages constantly popped out in front of him. Most of them were notices of crime skills that he had learned. The unpleasant fact was that they were all in the temporary skills window, and quickly disappeared like the salary of a worker.

‘Indeed, I couldn’t learn it because of my rating.’

Tae-hyuk looked down at his body and sighed. Naturally, there was no apparent change.

‘Of course. This isn’t an online game where I become more handsome due to an upgrade.’

It had been six months since he first got the crime skills.

‘...When I think about it, many things have changed.’

After gaining the memories of the future, the first thing he did was catch Yoo Cheol-ho. Even now, he couldn't help smiling as he recalled it. There had been many things since then, such as being involved in the cheating incident of a politician's son, as well as having his parents' keepsake stolen.

He solved them using skills acquired from the other person and then he became stagnant for a while. But now things had changed.

‘Eh? One thing that I saw in the status window...’

“T-Tae-hyuk... Sorry but please take this.”

Cho Kang-suk asked for help with the plastic bags full of food on the ground. Unfortunately, it seems like he would have to look at the Demon Revealing Mirror later.

“There is soondae, makguksu... Why did you buy so much?”

“Ohuhu... I bought food that is suitable to eat with tteokbokki.”

Ha-ran followed after him with a big smile.

They were ready to have a tteokbokki party.

“Wah... This is a lot of food.”

Tae-hyuk looked at the prepared food with his mouth wide open. Far from making him hungry, it was such a huge amount that his stomach hurt at the thought of eating it all. Kim Soo-bin also muttered with an embarrassed expression,

“I don’t think that even Alibaba and the 40 thieves could eat all of this.”

“Bah. If we say Open Sesame, won’t it all go into Detective Cho Kang-suk’s mouth?”

Song Hye-mi spoke to Soo-bin like they were real sisters,

“Kukuku... If you don’t eat then there won’t be anything left for you!”

Kang-suk threatened with an open mouth, causing Kim Soo-bin to laugh. Fortunately, she seemed to have recovered to a certain extent from the Doll Play event.

“Now, everyone please sit at the dining room table.”

Ha-ran finished setting out all of the food and beckoned towards the party. Kim Soo-bin and Song Hye-mi were hungry from the cold winter and started eating. They consciously didn’t say anything about Kim Soo-bin’s injury.



Therefore, the topic naturally turned to Phantom.

“I didn’t know that the person who saved Unni would become so famous.”

“Yes. He felt like a dark hero active in the darkness. All of a sudden, he appeared on TV...”

Cho Kang-suk scratched his head and sighed.

Phantom was wanted for bombing T Medical Centre and aiding in murder. He was now a criminal, but Hye-mi and Soo-bin were treating Phantom like he was a superhero in a movie. It was the same with the netizens on the Internet. Fan sites for Phantom were growing like bamboo shoots in a bamboo forest.

He did all types of illegal acts, but it was true that he judged criminals that the police couldn’t catch. As a result, Kim Soo-bin and four children kept their lives. Plus...

“Omo, Kang-suk. Could you look at me for a moment?”

“Huh?”

Seo Ha-ran wiped the tteokbokki sauce from Kang-suk’s mouth. Then a cry burst out from the side.

“Both of you, are the two of you dating? There is a suspicious atmosphere.”

“Hum hum... Anyway, Soo-bin. What do you plan to do with your donations?”

Kang-suk blushed and coughed a few times before saying uneasily,

“T-That... I don't know. It still isn't mine.”

Kim Soo-bin benefited the most from Phantom appearing on TV. She became a victim of the horrible incident, losing one arm and barely surviving. In addition, she was the first person that was saved by the dark hero, ‘Phantom.’ It was like the heroine of a movie had popped out in reality.

Thus, Kim Soo-bin instantly became famous. A considerable amount of money was collected from all over the country for her. The sum was almost more than 500 million. There were even companies that started a scholarship foundation to support her university tuition and those who offered her a job. It was evident that they wanted to piggyback on Phantom's fame.

But to Kim Soo-bin, it was like a ray of hope had started to shine in the darkness.

Kang-suk hesitated for a moment before slowly opening his mouth,

“Did you know that your father came to the hospital?”

“Yes...”

Even though the domestic violence caused the police to issue a restraining order, he was persistent. He claimed that he should be able to manage Kim Soo-bin’s money as she was his daughter and she was underage. Legally, he was Kim Soo-bin’s father. If he filed a lawsuit then the situation would become complicated.

In the end, Cho Kang-suk proposed a solution.

“So I was thinking. I will become your guardian and take care of you until you are an adult. H-H-How about it?”

Kang-suk stuttered out the last line. Kim Soo-bin covered her mouth with her hands at the unexpected suggestion.

“D-Detective-nim? W-Why...”

Kang-suk explained his thoughts in a low, subdued voice.

“I’m a detective. It is my job to catch criminals, and also my mission to protect the citizens. But this time, I couldn’t do anything. Phantom did what I should’ve done. He is obviously a criminal that should be arrested. However, if he was in front of me right now then I would like to thank him. So, I wanted to do

something that he couldn't do.”

“Ah...”

There were bugs after the money. After Seo Tae-hyuk got his first large amount of money, didn't moneylenders come after him? In addition, Kim Soo-bin was a soft girl.

“Of course, the most important thing to me is Soo-bin's thoughts. Don't you become an adult in a few years? If you allow me then I will be your guardian until that time.”

“T-thank you Detective-nim...”

She didn't know about other adults, but she could believe Cho Kang-suk. He had supported the orphanage for several years already. She also knew that he was the Santa who visited every year. Such a man being her guardian...

It felt like she had acquired an army behind her.

Hye-mi, who was busy eating, spat out something.

“Didn't Phantom calculate this when he came on TV?”

“D-Don't tell me... Then that...”

Kim Soo-bin recalled Phantom's last words.

‘Live.’

Kim Soo-bin survived like he said. Furthermore, she found an unexpected guardian. Was all this Phantom's plan?

“Hrmm? Did he say something?”

Kim Soo-bin told Kang-suk about her conversation with Phantom. His eyes reddened without realizing it.

“Damn... He is a criminal, but he is a really great guy.”

---

Tae-hyuk listened to the conversation between Kim Soo-bin and Cho Kang-suk and realized that his plan was successful.

‘This will make Phantom a symbol.’

He was fighting to escape the fate of being framed and imprisoned. His weapons were his crime skills. He walked alone while committing crimes. Even without being framed, there was always a possibility of going to jail for the crimes he did commit.

Thus, the existence of Phantom the God of Crime emerged. He was a distinct symbol completely separate from Seo Tae-hyuk. In

the future, he would be able to do things more freely.

‘In order to do that, I have to hide my identity more completely.’

It wasn’t enough to simply change his voice. Tae-hyuk saw new possibilities in his crime skills. Evolution into a top skill...!

It was one of the best perks that Tae-hyuk received from becoming a Noble. Tae-hyuk pressed on the details of the Voice Modulation skill. Then an explanation that he hadn’t seen before emerged.

[If you satisfy the conditions, it will evolve into the top skill ‘Disguise’.]

‘Disguise!’

The name evidently meant that it was a skill to change his appearance. It was a skill that Tae-hyuk needed.

‘It would be good if I could gain it for free.’

However, it was likely that a great deal of work was needed to obtain it.

“If you allow me then I will be your guardian until that time.”

At that moment, Tae-hyuk almost spat out the tteokbokki he was eating. How much had he struggled to get Kang-suk and Ha-ran together. What? Guardian? Of course, he had guessed based on Kang-suk's character but he hadn't expected this offer.

'N-Noona! Then Kang-suk hyung will come with a family. Is this the time to be looking with such a warm expression?'

The time for dating seemed to be reduced even further.

Tae-hyuk frowned.

He should make Kim Soo-bin able to live alone as soon as possible for the sake of those two. The first thing to take care of was her arm.

'Well, maybe it would be good to give her another arm?'

In the early days, a mannequin arm that looked awkward would be used. However, technology was evolving and a number of smart robot technology was being actively researched. The replacement wouldn't be better than her original arm, but at least she could live a normal everyday life.

'The problem is the price.'

So far, the technology wasn't commercialized. He didn't want to

invested hundreds of millions of dollars into a mechanical arm that didn't work well.

‘Then I can steal it.’

He also wondered if he could copy it with Forgery. If he could copy a number of robots then the utilization would increase.

‘It is worth a try.’

Tae-hyuk looked at Kim Soo-bin like she was an experimental guinea pig.

---

“Ohh... I am also a student.”

After a short winter vacation, Tae-hyuk went to school and languished on his desk. Despite his bad looks, the teacher's heavy hand disappeared after he became a model student. But human nature didn't change that easily. Every time he sat on his desk, a yawn would emerge.

“Where is Class President today?”

An Eun-young wasn't sitting next to him. It was uncommon for her personality. Did something happen?



“Let’s send a message.”

Dururuk!

“T-Tae-hyuk!”

An Eun-young opened the door and entered with a joyful smile. She ran to Tae-hyuk to deliver the good news first. An Eun-young approached Tae-hyuk and took deep breaths.

“Eh? You seem to be in a great mood. It was only a few weeks of holiday...”

“That’s not...I got into university.”

“Eh?”

“I mean, I was admitted through special admissions. I did the entrance exam during the vacation because of the principal’s recommendation. I got lucky and narrowly passed.”

Tae-hyuk laughed.

Narrowly passed? It was a clear pass.

“Congratulations.”

“Yes. I’m sure my mother will be very happy.”

“Then what university did you get into?”

“Uh, yes. S Uni...”

“Wait a minute. That is the best!”

“Hehehe... Yes, I was lucky.”

A special admission to the nation’s top university. It was natural for An Eun-young, who studied so much that she got the studying skill. Her effort paid off.

Tae-hyuk’s eyes shone.

‘Didn’t S University have one of the largest robotics research laboratories in Korea? If she passed then she will be allowed on a tour.’

Tae-hyuk started plotting. An Eun-young misunderstood his look and poked her fingers together.

“B-But don’t worry. I won’t graduate early as I plan to go next year. T-The promise to go to university together is still valid...”

“Yes. Thank you.”

An Eun-young's cheeks reddened at his answer.

“T-Then... I am going to meet my mother after class today. Do you want to come along?”

An Eun-young then realized what she was saying. It was almost like she was introducing a boyfriend to her parents. Of course, he had met her dad a few days ago but this was the first time meeting her mother.

An Eun-young looked away from Tae-hyuk.

Of course, Tae-hyuk instantly welcomed this offer. It wasn't uncomfortable if they could take a tour of the university together.

“Yes.”

“Yes!”

An Eun-young nodded vigorously.

## Chapter 84 – I Am A Noble #2

---

“By the way, since you’re accepted into university now, what are you going to do in school now? In the meantime, we will be studying for the entrance exams.”

“Yes. I want to finish one year of studies in advance.”

“Huh?”

An Eun-young nodded and explained.

For example, medical school was two years long. There were subjects such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology etc. Once she entered this course, there would be no room for liberal arts subjects due to the tight schedule. General chemistry, organic chemistry, general biology, cell biology, molecular biology, genetics and so on... After two years of preliminary study, she would enter the main course and start studying to become a full-fledged doctor.

Tae-hyuk groaned.

Study for studying...

He instantly imagined dozens of student doctors sitting in white robes with dark circles under their eyes. It was a great feeling.

“T-That isn’t it. Anyway, I like it.”

An Eun-young replied with an embarrassed face.

As promised in the morning, Tae-hyuk would go to the downtown general hospital to meet An Eun-young’s mother. Her father was the director there.

“Then you will go there to work after graduating?”

“Uhh. Perhaps not? I’m just studying hard so that I can follow in my father’s footsteps.”

An Eun-young had a definite plan for her future. Tae-hyuk dropped his gaze with a sullen expression.

“I’m envious, as I still haven’t decided what university to go to yet.”

“W-Would you like to take a field trip to my university on the weekend? There aren’t any undergraduates there yet because it’s still winter vacation, but the professors and research students will be there. You will surely find something!”

“Can I go?”

“Yes, I talked to my department head. S University also has campus tours, so it’ll be a good experience.”

Tae-hyuk was careful not to let An Eun-young see his smirk. It was subtle, but it wouldn't be good if she saw it. This allowed him to enter her school very naturally.

As Tae-hyuk rejoiced, An Eun-young also smiled happily.

‘Anyway, we really have become quite close if I can talk to Class President like this.’

As for An Eun-young, she wanted to be more than friends with Tae-hyuk; unfortunately, he didn't think that far yet.

‘Then the problem of access is solved. First of all, I need to gather information from the robotics department.’

As An Eun-young agonized on whether she should hold his hand, Tae-hyuk was plotting a crime.

---

“Sorry, would you like to go first? The weather is cold these days and I'm just going to buy a blanket for my mother. I should've prepared it in advance but I forgot. If you go to the room then Unni should be there. Ah right, didn't you meet her the other day?”

An Eun-young cautiously said once she was in front of the hospital. A few days ago, her sister had come back to visit. Tae-

hyuk nodded as he looked at the hospital room number.

“Eun-jeong noona? It’s been a long time since I last saw her.”

“Huh? Wasn’t a few days ago the first time you saw her?”

Tae-hyuk said nothing. There was an event with Eun-jeong but they had decided to keep it a secret from Eun-young.

‘Is it okay when she reacted to me like a rat seeing a cat?’

Tae-hyuk scratched his head and entered the hospital. He was moving to an area where the patients had significantly low immune levels. In order to go there, he had to remove the germs from his body and wear a cotton garment provided by the hospital.

“Was it F floor?”

Tae-hyuk got on the elevator and pressed the floor that Eun-mi, An Eun-jeong’s mother was hospitalized on. He arrived on the fourth floor with a loud ding. The air was strangely changed, and felt similar to the Death Circus or T Medical Centre.

[Spying has found an image of intense death.]

‘You shut up.’

Tae-hyuk waved his hand in the air and made the Demon Revealing Mirror disappear.

But the atmosphere was unusual. Doctors and nurses were running around holding charts.

Tae-hyuk went to the reception and informed the nurse about his visit. She handed him a pass with a nice smile and told him to go to the room at the end of the corridor.

At that moment, Tae-hyuk got a bad feeling. After going through several controlled doors, he entered a sealed, clean room. The nurse guarding the door looked at Tae-hyuk's pass and opened the door without saying anything.

There was a large room with a glass door that made it possible to see inside. It was a sterile room so that visitors could see the patient inside. However, people were doing something around the bed.

“Vitals check?”

“Quickly get the defibrillator ready!”

“Her heart is stopping!”

An Eun-jeong was sitting next to the bed and whispering to the



middle-aged woman lying down.

“Eun-young is coming now to visit... Mama... Please... Just hold on for a little longer...”

Tae-hyuk realized what was happening. It was a situation where death could no longer be held back.

And the pulse on the graph became flat —.

The doctors saw her condition and covered her body with the white bed sheet.

“Time of death is 4:10 p.m on the 6th of January.”

Eun-jeong buried her face in the bed sheets. Tae-hyuk opened the door and silently went inside. The the doctor spoke in a slightly shaky voice,

“Did you come to visit? I’m sorry. If I knew this would happen, then I would have given permission one hour earlier...”

The doctor said before leaving. The nurse at the side said,

“At least someone was with her at the last moments.”

Tae-hyuk inwardly screamed. An Eun-young wasn’t here right

now. Just knowing this fact made him feel terrible. Then how would An Eun-young, a family member, feel? She was a little late because she was buying a gift. Meanwhile, her mother passed away.

What would Eun-young feel after realizing this? An Eun-young had studied hard in the hope of making her mother feel better. She just got into the university that she wanted. What could he say to her, who would be rushing in to share the good news?

The remaining nurses quietly disappeared in consideration of the family members.

The crying An Eun-jeong slowly lifted her head. Then she moaned as she saw Tae-hyuk.

“What happened to Eun-young...?”

“She is a little late because she was buying a present.”

“...I see.”

“.....”

After a moment, Eun-jeong started talking.

“Mama... A few days ago, I was very healthy. I ate well... I said sorry for what happened and was forgiven... I laughed so much... I

thought I could be a good daughter from now on, but it seems I was a little late.”

Eun-jeong’s voice was shaky.

‘Could I have changed the ending if I was aware of it?’

Tae-hyuk had memories of the future but he didn’t know everything.

–I wanted to tell her directly that I got into university, not through the phone. Won’t she compliment me then?

Eun-young’s smiling face popped into his head. An Eun-young had put forth an incredible effort in order to hear those words, but now it would be for nothing.

Tae-hyuk felt some incredibly complicated emotions. He didn’t like this ending.

An Eun-young had helped Tae-hyuk become a model student. Due to her existence, he was able to know the existence of An Eun-jeong, Seo Ha-ran’s friend. He didn’t want it to just end like this.

‘At the very least, I want her to tell her mother that she got into university. Is there some way?’

Tae-hyuk checked the crime skills using the Demon Revealing

Mirror. He had knowledge of the future, but it wasn't possible to animate the dead. The only way...

‘Yes. I can do that.’

Tae-hyuk slowly nodded.

He decided to distort reality and present a false memory. But to do that, he had to get Eun-mi's voice.

“Eun-jeong noona. Do you have your mother's voice recorded anywhere?”

“Uh...yes? Mother's voice is on the home answering machine.”

He had never done it this way before. By default, he had to meet the person directly in order to imitate the voice. However, it was impossible to have a conversation with someone who was dead. What would happen if he heard her recorded voice?

Tae-hyuk nodded and called Eun-young's house. About 30 seconds, it switched to the answering machine.

-This is An Jeong-hun, Lee Eun-mi, An Eun-jeong and An Eun-young's house. I'm sorry but no one is at home because everyone is working hard. Please leave your phone number and we will call you back.



[Lee Eun-mi's voice has been registered.]

[The Voice Modulation skill can imitate Lee Eun-mi's voice.]

Fortunately, the voice was successfully registered. An Eun-jeong, who was listening beside Tae-hyuk, started to cry again. She was still part of the family message despite living away from home for several years.

“M-Mother...”

The sheet cover Lee Eun-mi flowed down to reveal her face. Her eyes were closed like she was sleeping in a relaxed manner. Was she happy because her daughter, who had left home, had returned at the last moment?

“Noona. I'll be outside for a while.”

“.....”

Tae-hyuk went out of the room and saw An Jeong-hun, whom he had met a week ago, coming with tearful eyes.

“H-Honey...!”

Tae-hyuk didn't want to disturb the family members so he quietly headed to the waiting room. He used the phone there to call

Eun-young. He manipulated the Demon Revealing Mirror to gain the voice of Lee Eun-mi.

“Our daughter! Why are you so late?”

-M-Mama?

“I have been waiting for you. How long does it take to buy a good gift?”

-I-I’m sorry. I’ll go up right now.

“Mother heard from Tae-hyuk. What’s the good news?”

Then An Eun-young’s voice brightened.

-Yes. I got into S University! I will study hard to make Mother better.

“...Great, our daughter. Congratulations! Look, isn’t that a hard task? So don’t study too much! Go eat delicious things and play around. I’m sorry that I couldn’t make breakfast for you before you took the exam. Still, our daughter is doing so well that Mother is happy.”

-Hehehe... Mama, there is no need.

“Eun-young. I will always be behind you so live well.”

-M-Mama? W-What are you saying so suddenly. M-Mama...!

Eun-young started to call out for her mother as she got a bad feeling.

“Eun-young, our daughter, I love you.”

Tae-hyuk hung up.

He was sure that Lee Eun-mi would've said something like this. Then he hid in the hallway and looked at the room where Eun-mi was.

Eun-young ran inside holding two lap blankets. She hadn't been able to decide which was better.

Was this really okay? Tae-hyuk wondered if what he did was helpful to Eun-young. The last conversation with her mother was a false reality made by Tae-hyuk. Eun-young had been deeply happy to hear the congratulations. It seemed like all the efforts she had gone through had been rewarded.

Tae-hyuk sat on the floor and sighed.

It was a lie. A despicable crime. But at least she had the memory of a last conversation with her mother. If Lee Eun-mi knew...

Then an amazing thing happened.

[You have assimilated with Lee Eun-mi and conveyed her heart.]

[You have succeeded in distorting reality and making a soft miracle.]

There was a notification that he acquired a new skill.

[The top skill Disguise has been acquired.]

-You can disguise yourself with the face of someone you have met.

The new crime skill, Disguise!

It was on a completely different realm from Voice Modulation where he could only change his voice. Now he would be able to turn his face into someone else's, along with their voice.

It was a skill that Tae-hyuk needed. However, Tae-hyuk was more concerned about the message that said he had assimilated with Lee Eun-mi. It was clear that...



“Eun-young. It is like this. I’m sure that your mother is proud of you too. Congrats on your acceptance into university.”

Tae-hyuk closed his eyes as he spoke Lee Eun-mi’s heart.

## Chapter 85 – Genius And Genius #1

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The newly acquired Disguise skill had one fatal drawback. Tae-hyuk muttered as he stared at Kim Bum-soo's face in the mirror.

“This just changes the face?”

It would be okay if he disguised as a man of a similar height while wearing thick clothes, but it would be creepy if he had a woman's face with the body of a man below the shoulders. It was obviously a great ability, but some things still couldn't be helped.

“That means that if I disguise as a Hollywood actor, I still won't have the muscular body.”

At first, he could only change his voice using Voice Modulation. Then it evolved into changing his face with Disguise. Then at the end, would he be able to change his body?

“Cough... Won't that be a transformation rather than a disguise? It would be a big hit like X-ray Vision.”

Upgrading his rank gave him the opportunity to strengthen his skills. He had already started to wonder how his other skills would change. But he had to first investigate the skill he gained this time.

“First of all, I need to find out how long Disguise lasts.”

In the case of Voice Modulation, it was okay to keep his mouth shut if his voice suddenly returned to normal. However, that wasn't the case with his face. If he made a mistake, then he would be arrested immediately.

Tae-hyuk, who had Kim Bum-soo's face, looked at himself in the mirror and made several facial expressions. Kim Bum-soo was an actor who could change between dozens of expressions freely.

Tae-hyuk spoke his famous line,

“How dare you destroy the 500 year history of the Goryeo Dynasty!”

He could act out a drama by speaking in a different voice.

‘Acting is possible.’

He did a few more lines before looking at the time. After 30 minutes, he returned to his original face.

‘This is the limit right now? I have to be careful.’

It seemed he would have to carry a timer to tell him the time limit for Disguise. Next, he changed his face to people he met such as Yoo Cheol-ho, Park Sung-kwang, and Choi Sung-yeol. Then he tried some nice faces.

“I-I can’t tell Big Mama and Moonlight Flower about this.”

The proficiency test was sufficient.

Tae-hyuk had shattered T Medical Center around a week ago. Obviously, it was one of the business sites managed by the Chinese mafia, ‘the Triads.’ Furthermore, he appeared on TV under the name Phantom. The video had spread around various streaming sites and received hundreds of thousands of views.

‘It is highly likely that the Triads is prepared for war.’

Tae-hyuk lived in prison and was exposed to information that the public didn’t know about. One of them was the Mafia War that occurred around two years later.

The Triads, who secretly infiltrated Korea, was enjoying enormous profits. The Russian mob and Japanese Yakuza then mobilized their forces to fight them. Thus, the criminals of three countries waged a war in South Korea.

Tae-hyuk had smashed one of the businesses of the Triad, which could be considered as the starting point of the war.

He didn’t know what effect it would have, even with Tae-hyuk’s future knowledge. The so-called butterfly effect, a scientific theory stating that a butterfly flapping its wings in Brazil might generate a tornado in Texas. In addition, Tae-hyuk’s actions weren’t at the level of a butterfly flapping its wings, but a devastating tornado.

Then the result might be even more destructive.

“Either way, I need to pay close attention to the movements of the Triads.”

Once all the tests were finished, Tae-hyuk wore his leather jacket and left the house. First of all, he needed to keep his promise with An Eun-young.

---

Joo Hyun-ho met with a professor of criminology at his alma mater, S University.

The female professor laughed as she looked at her best pupil.

“Then I would like to ask you to do the freshmen orientation.”

S University would hold an orientation for their freshmen in the middle of February. The schedule included inviting graduates to give a lecture on their related occupation. The person who would shine this year was Joo Hyun-ho, the genius investigator who solved many cases.

“I have plenty of time.”

“But aren’t the police in an uproar due to Phantom?”

Joo Hyun-ho shook his head.

“It is the first time I’ve seen such a disruptive criminal. Countless people took off their clothes because of him.”

“Then isn’t Investigator Joo Hyun-ho also in danger?”

“It isn’t too bad if I can play and eat at home.”

“As expected of a building owner... I suppose I can get you a job as a security guard here if you retire.”

“Haha...”

“Then do you have a schedule after this?”

“Ah, I am going to visit my school club for the first time in a while.”

The young professor nodded. She wanted to have a meal with her pupil, whom she hadn’t seen in a long time, but Hyun-ho didn’t realize this fact. He understood the psychology of criminals but had no understanding of women. If possible, she wanted to teach him for a few more years.

“Then go after having a drink. If you wait then my assistant will bring it.”

“Yes, I understand.”

While waiting, Joo Hyun-ho used his smartphone to look up the T Medical Center case. As for the related terms, more than half of it was about the criminal wearing the opera mask, Phantom. Despite the fact that the article was just published, there were hundreds of comments already.

–Amazing. Then they kidnapped orphans and sold their organs?  
□ □ □

–It is good that the scum died.

–Yes. Even if they were arrested by the police, they would just be sent home.

–I’ve watched Phantom’s video 20 times already.

–By the way, didn’t his voice strangely sound like Kim Bum-soo?  
○ ㄸ?

–In the end, isn’t he just a murderer? I don’t understand why people are regarding him as a hero.

–He didn’t kill them himself so how is he a murderer? Besides, he caught the criminals that the police couldn’t. Isn’t that great?

The debate about Phantom was constantly ongoing.

Joo Hyun-ho sighed.

It was such a perfect defeat that he couldn't even feel resentful. He conducted an investigation to catch the culprit who decorated a tree with dead bodies. However, what he thought was a bizarre mutilation murder was actually organ trafficking.

He had been able to solve Ryu Myung-hwa's disappearance, but that was only due to Cho Kang-suk's senses. In the end, Joo Hyun-ho had done nothing in this case.

“Hu... I should return the title of genius investigator”

At that time, the assistant knocked and entered with cups of coffee. After drinking it, Joo Hyun-ho stood up and said,

“Thank you. Then I will be going now.”

“Ah... Thank you for today, Investigator Joo Hyun-ho.”

“No, thank you for agreeing.”

Joo Hyun-ho decided to take a walk around the campus to sort out his complicated head.

“Phantom...”



An unidentified criminal who suddenly appeared. Although the media only knew about the trafficking case, he had been active for a while before. His first appearance was when he caught the Hippo for the police.

It was also clear that Phantom was the one who saved Jung Yuri. Joo Hyun-ho had met with Jung Yuri and asked what happened, but she only replied that she couldn't remember.

“There is obviously something.”

The Phantom had bombs containing immense destruction. He was a criminal that absolutely had to be arrested, but his whereabouts were unknown. In the end, it was a situation where only the bottom tier employees suffered.

“Ohh... Damn!”

Joo Hyun-ho, whose head was hurting, kicked a stone on the ground. As he glanced up, he saw a man and woman who seemed to be high school students. The man was in plain clothes but the woman was wearing a uniform. Maybe it was a field trip to the university.

“T-Tae-hyuk. There is an art exhibition. Robots will also be displayed there.”

“Great. Let's go see it together.”

“I-Is that so? Yes, let’s go.”

The male high school student was looking around with a nonchalant expression, but the female high school student couldn’t keep her eyes away from the man’s face.

Joo Hyun-ho laughed at the sight. Why couldn’t the male student notice when it was just so obvious?

At this point, Joo Hyun-ho and the high school students passed by each other. Then the girl lost her balance and stumbled. Joo Hyun-ho reflexively reached out and caught her shoulder. It was the same with the male student. Joo Hyun-ho and the male student’s hands touched for a brief moment. The girl bowed with a sorry expression,

“Ah... I’m sorry. I think it was due to a stone.”

“Haha, it’s nothing.”

It seemed like she wasn’t paying to her feet while looking at the man’s face.

“Class President. Are you hurt anywhere?”

“Uhh. I’m fine.”

Joo Hyun-ho looked at the male student, who was wearing a leather jacket. It was an appearance that didn't look neat.

At that time, the man said something,

“You seem to have dropped this.”

“Ah, when did that fall?”

“I think it fell when we bumped into you just now. Then we will be going.”

Joo Hyun-ho scratched his head.

He thought it had been placed securely in his Burberry coat.

“It would be bad if I lost this. Thanks for picking it up. Are you touring the campus?”

The female student replied,

“Yes. I will be attending next year.”

“It is January yet you already passed? Isn't that great?”

“Hehehe...”

“In fact, I am a graduate of this school. If you don’t mind, would you like me to guide you around?”

“Is it okay?”

Joo Hyun-ho looked at her and said,

“I heard by chance. Did you want to go to the art exhibition? I know the curator there. If you go with me then you’ll be able to see a little more. “

At that moment, the male student’s eyes flashed.

“We can see it in detail?”

“Yes. It is impossible to touch but you can look at it directly. Think of it as the price for a police investigator not noticing that his police badge dropped. Ah right. I am Joo Hyun-ho.”

“An Eun-young.”

“I am Seo Tae-hyuk.”

The three people who met by chance introduced themselves to each other, but their meeting wasn’t a coincidence.

---

The young boss of Huaqing, one of the 12 branches of the Triads, listened to the report from his subordinates.

“Then in the end, the whole place didn’t blow up?”

“Yes, Boss.”

It was the title for the leader of the organization.

“The culprit is this bastard.”

Li Zheng watched the video of Phantom on his laptop and muttered. He had lost a business that earned him billions of dollars every year because of some stupid bastard. Li Zheng was furious.

The leader of his subordinates asked him,

“What would you like to do?”

“He killed seven of our people. It can only be repaid with blood.”

“I understand.”

“I will give you a month. Present the Phantom’s head to me. And this time, bring Big Brother.”

Li Zheng glared at his subordinates as he spoke,

“B-Big Brother?”

“Yes.”

“B-But he...!”

His subordinate’s voice shook with fear. Big Brother was the best killer in Huaqing. However, he was cruel and violent so he wasn’t easily handled. It showed how angry Boss was due to this incident.

“We have to catch Phantom even if we burn Korea in the process. That is my, no. Huaqing’s will!”

“As Boss commands!”

His subordinate bowed to Li Zheng before gathering the other members.

## Chapter 86 – Genius And Genius #2

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“What’s the trend among high school students these days?”

Joo Hyun-ho suddenly asked as he guided them around the school. However, he had prepared this question from the moment he met them.

It was the reason why he was accompanying the high school students. The answer would naturally be Phantom, allowing Hyun-ho to hear about him. Setting aside the public opinion on the Internet, he wanted to know what ordinary students thought about Phantom. Therefore, he would hear the answer from the high school students he met by chance.

An Eun-young tapped her lips with a finger and thought for a moment,

“It is calculus? Once it is learned properly, it is helpful in studying for university and is surprisingly fun. Interesting things like linear algebra and ordinary differential equations... In particular, I like the Laplace transform the most.”

“I-Is that so?”

Joo Hyun-ho started sweating at the unexpected response.

These days, high school girls seemed to be learning university level maths as a hobby.

“In recent years, there is a tendency to have complex problems that can’t be solved by just one area, such as the matrix, function, derivative and integral. You need to know the exact intentions...”

An Eun-young suddenly bowed with a flustered face.

“I-I-I’m sorry. I don’t think that is what you were asking...”

“Haha. An Eun-young’s interest is studying. I suppose that is how you passed the special admission. That is how you passed right?”

“Yes...”

Joo Hyun-ho nodded, and looked at the girl again. Come to think of it, the place where they were currently walking was S University. Those who entered through special admissions were considered to be the best of the best in the country.

On the other hand, the boy she was with had a different atmosphere. How did they become so friendly?

Joo Hyun-ho laughed at the thought. He was analyzing children. It was the so-called occupational disease. Come to think of it, he was like this before becoming an investigator...

“Then what is Seo Tae-hyuk interested in these days?”



This time, Hyun-ho shifted his gaze to Tae-hyuk.

“Interested?”

“You don’t have to be so nervous. I’m just asking as a personal interest.”

Tae-hyuk coughed.

His heart was still wary after he accidentally stole a police badge before. When he first got the crime skills, he stole wigs, handcuffs, underwear and various other things, but he had rarely made mistakes recently. However, he had accidentally bumped into Joo Hyun-ho. In the end, Robbery was triggered. He was able to steal the other person’s belonging in one try thanks to his 50 points in dexterity.

Joo Hyun-ho might have been suspicious if it wasn’t for An Eun-young’s innocent face. It seemed like Hyun-ho had relaxed after talking to An Eun-young a little bit.

‘Huh? Wait a minute... He feels comfortable with Class President...? Is this also the impact of the studying skill?’

It hadn’t been to this degree before, so maybe her skill had also evolved.

‘By the way, what am I interested in?’

Tae-hyuk thought for a moment before answering Joo Hyun-ho's question.

"Isn't it money? I want to buy a house. In today's low-growth era, cash is the best. I recently found a good way to make money. I'm thinking of earning money whenever I can."

"...These days, children are growing up prematurely. I was busy talking about games all day when I was younger.

"I love games."

"Eh? What games?"

"Poker, Go, Texas Hold'em, Blackjack... Well, anything that makes money. But rumors spread since I keep winning, so it wasn't always good."

"Cough. In my time, it was just flipping coins on a book..."

"Well, it is similar."

In the end, Joo Hyun-ho's expression turned grumpy because he couldn't get the information he wanted. Were all kids like this these days?

Once they arrived at the destination, Joo Hyun-ho started to give

an explanation.

“Why is there a museum on school grounds?”

“It says here.”

Tae-hyuk waved the pamphlet about the school.

“In order to do community service, this university opened up some facilities for the public. It is a multi-purpose space boasting a unique architectural style and displays modern and contemporary art.”

Hyun-ho ignored Tae-hyuk and continued the explanation,

“Especially in the winter, it is displaying various works of art from the Baroque period in cooperation with the Russian Hermitage Museum.

It was a strangely familiar name. Tae-hyuk searched through his future memories.

“Isn’t it the museum created by Catherine the Great?”

Hyun-ho asked with wide eyes,

“Oh. You surprisingly have a lot of interest in art. Do you plan to

pursue this path?’

“That’s not it. I just found out by chance.”

“I thought you were a chrysalis for a moment.”

Tae-hyuk narrowed his eyes.

Obviously, the Hermitage contained a collection of artworks from all over the world, causing it to be called one of the world’s three largest museums. And if his memories were right, Russia’s [Red Mafia] operated there. Ironically, the owner of the museum was the world’s foremost forgery specialist.

“Then the works of Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael, Robinson, Picasso, Van Gogh and Renoir are displayed here?”

“Aish, no way. No matter how cooperative, they wouldn’t lend us something so famous. At best, they have Poussin or Rubens pieces.”

“I am sure that the value of the paintings in the Hermitage Museum is close to a trillion won in terms of money.”

Tae-hyuk’s eyes shone.

As Joo Hyun-ho said, famous paintings were worth billions of won. The reason he came here was to get information on the

machine ‘Machina’ for Kim Soo-bin. However, it was possible to raise his discerning eye by viewing artwork. He never knew when he needed Forgery again. It would be better if he could make some preparations in advance.

“Director! It has been a long time.”

Joo Hyun-ho greeted the man dozing at the entrance of the museum. The old man with grey hair acted ignorant.

“Eh? Who is this? If it isn’t Investigator Joo? But the people with you...”

“They are touring the school and wanted to see the museum. It is break time right now, so is it okay for them to look?”

“Of course. But Investigator Joo owes me.”

“Thank you.”

Kim Hyun-do, the curator of the art museum, easily nodded.

“Students are good at observing. Ah right, if you step over a line then you will hear a beep. Watch out, since the police will come.”

“Ah, yes. I understand.”

“Should I call a guide?”

“It is okay. Thank you for letting us in during the break time.”

The reason why Kim Hyun-do could look relaxed despite the museum full of expensive paintings was simple. The inside of the museum was so strictly managed that not even one ant could hide.

“Did you know that most paintings displayed in museums are forgeries?”

“R-Really?”

An Eun-young’s eyes widened since this was the first time she heard about it. Then people were paying to look at fakes.

Joo Hyun-ho said with a smile.

“Vincent van Gogh’s self-portrait and Renoirs’ Bal du moulin de la Galette are worth billions of won, and are too valuable to be displayed in museums. So, as an alternative, replicas were made of ceramic plates. They stay well in light and are strong against fire. The guests can also touch them directly. They can also take a commemorative photo in front of it. A lot of people prefer this.”

“It is the first time I’ve heard of this!”

“The funny thing is that a replica created properly can be priced

at hundreds of million of won. In some cases, a replica of the replica is on the market. It is like the Matryoshka dolls. Isn't it funny?"

An Eun-young smiled without making a sound. Then she noticed Tae-hyuk staring silently at a painting.

"Huh? Tae-hyuk?"

Most of the paintings displayed here were authentic. They were surrounded by a barrier to prevent access. If someone stepped inside then the warning system installed would go off.

Seo Tae-hyuk looked at the painting with a serious expression and said in a quiet voice,

"...It is a wonderful painting."

"Eh? Your eyes are surprisingly good. That is Rubens' 'The Descent of the Cross'."

An Eun-young spoke with an impressed face.

"T-Then this is the painting that the protagonists from a Dog of Flanders wanted to see last...?"

"Correct. Ruben's work is displayed directly in the cathedral.

“Wah...”

An Eun-young looked at the displayed Rubens painting with shining eyes. He was a painter who painted many grandiose and brilliant mythical and religious paintings throughout Europe. Anyone would think of him when thinking of a Baroque master painter. Now she could see his paintings close up.

Tae-hyuk asked,

“Is this authentic?”

“Of course. So you shouldn’t touch it. The huge security bell here will ring.”

“Famous works are being displayed. Isn’t it surprisingly not well know? I think the attendance would be big if it was advertised as the painting from a Dog of Flanders.”

“Right? I also think it is a bit strange. Well, it seems like the director doesn’t like doing such a thing.”

“I see. Thank you for the explanation.”

“Then I guess I did a good job. There is a school club where I worked as the manager. Would you like to go? It is a mystery club. There are things like murder props, and we also have mystery novels so you will have fun there.”



“I also like mystery novels! What will Tae-hyuk do?”

“Um... I want to look at the paintings a bit more. I will follow you in five minutes, so go ahead and play.”

“Is that so?”

“Then don’t come too late.”

Hyun-ho and Eun-young were delighted to learn that they were both huge mystery novel fans. They left the museum while asking about each other’s favourite works.

Tae-hyuk’s eyes flashed as he stayed behind and looked at the Rubens painting. He wasn’t mistaken.

“This is a fake.”

---

There was a fake product in a museum that only displayed genuine items. It was made so well that his crime skills reacted.

[You have seen a forgery of incredible perfection.]

[The level of your discerning eye has risen.]

[The autograph of the artist is hidden behind it.]

Sometimes forgeries were brought in if it was too risky to display the original. But the expenses of the exhibition was too heavy to display a fake.

‘There is something here.’

Fortunately, it was currently the museum’s break time. There was only a minimum of staff in the hall, with the rest eating or resting.

To avoid any doubts, Tae-hyuk first left the museum and hid behind the building and took out the opera mask. He also didn’t forget to use Disguise in case his mask was peeled off. After changing into clothes that looked like a tuxedo, the Phantom disguise was completed.

‘Was his name Kim Hyun-do?’

Tae-hyuk boldly entered the museum through the front door. The yawning Kim Hyun-do said,

“I’m sorry but we are currently on break. Please return 30 minutes later... A-Ack! Ah...I’m really sorry. Isn’t this in fashion these days?”

Since the advent of Phantom on the TV, it was the fashion to walk around with opera masks. Kim Hyun-do often saw people wearing opera masks so he was only a little surprised.

“I am the original product.”

Tae-hyuk smiled as he slowly took off his mask. The face behind it was Kim Hyun-do's.

“Aaaaack G-Ghost, ghost...!”

Kim Hyun-do shrieked and fell off his chair. Then he stuttered out,

“H-H-Here, d-did you come here to blow it up?”

Tae-hyuk shrugged and replied,

“I don't always bomb people. I just wanted to have a private talk with Director. Don't worry. It will end very soon.”

The mouth below the mask slowly curved upwards.

## Chapter 87 – Genius And Genius #3

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Hyun-ho's eyes shone as he saw the new manager of the school club.

“Eh? You're the manager? Weren't you a freshman?”

“That was four years ago. At any rate, I called all the members after hearing that Sunbae-nim was coming. We can listen to the vivid scene directly from the mouth of someone on the industry... Kuheok...!”

“There are more people?”

“Yep!”

“Three of them?”

“But this year, I am one of them...”

It was curious that this club was still alive.

“In fact, today I brought a candidate. Unfortunately, she left because there was a problem at home. Still, she'll definitely accept this place. Perhaps she'll join after being admitted?”

“Wah. Thank you, Sunbae-nim.”

Joo Hyun-ho looked at the club that was filled with memories of his university days. As a mystery club, the bookshelves were filled with mystery novels. Edgar Allan Poe, Arthur Conan Doyle, Agatha Christie, John Dickson Carr, and so on. Most of the novels were classics.

“Due to this place, I was called a genius investigator.”

“Praising yourself in this situation! Sunbae-nim is wonderful!”

Joo Hyun-ho pulled out a small envelop and held it out.

“Are you not getting proper support? Add this to supplement your budget.”

“Heok... T-Thank you. Attention! Salute towards Sunbae-nim!:

The members stood up and bowed towards Joo Hyun-ho.

“Thank you, Sunbae-nim!”

“Well, I don’t want to lose this place where I have some fond memories of Kang-suk sunbae.”

A woman, who heard Joo Hyun-ho’s murmur, asked,

“Is that who Sunbae-nim won the mafia game with?”

“Uh, it has been seven years but someone still remembers.”

“Of course! I saw it and became interesting in deduction! Whoa, whoa. In this type of place, the best stars of the mafia game...”

“Huhu. Do you want my signature?”

“Yes! Please!”

Mafia Game was the name of a popular TV entertainment program a few years ago where the contestants were divided into police or mafia and played a variety of reasoning games. National MC's with an IQ of 150, comedians, politicians, etc. were all contestants. There were hundreds of participants, started from broadcasters to ordinary people.

After Joo Hyun-ho won it twice, he was called the genius of deduction. Even now when he was an investigator, he would recall that experience and sometimes a flash of inspiration would come.

“So there was a connection like this. It was a vivid scene for a club junior...”

At that moment, he received a call from Kim Do-shik. Joo Hyun-ho had been planning to tell his juniors some exciting stories.

“This was my only vacation. Indeed, if I’m not present then there is no investigation. Excuse me while I take this call.”

Joo Hyun-ho pressed the call button on the phone as he left the room. Then he heard Kim Do-shik’s agitated voice,

-Investigator Joo Hyun-ho. I’m sorry to call on your day off. But aren’t you at S Univeristy right now?

“Haha. Inspector. This isn’t like you. It hasn’t even been a day and yet...”

-Stop joking. At any rate, if you are at S University then go to the museum there.

“Has something happened?”

-Do you know the Rubens painting there?

“Yes. I was just looking at it.”

-There is a chance that the painting is a forgery. I arrested a Russian smuggler this morning and many Rubens paintings were found. I’m not sure yet so I wanted you to go and see if there is anything suspicious. Can’t you read them using human psychology?

Joo Hyun-ho’s eyes sharpened.

“I think it will be hard for me alone. It isn’t my area of expertise.”

–An expert will soon arrive on the scene. I don’t have a warrant yet so just talk to people.

“I understand.”

–You can hear the details from the expert. Then do your best.

Joo Hyun-ho sighed as Kim Do-shik hung up. It was a place where he was meeting his club juniors after a long time, yet there was a new case.

“Art forgery...”

His heart started to beat faster at the thought of meeting his rival.

---

“C-Can I call you Phantom?”

Tae-hyuk replied while blindfolding Kim Hyun-do,

“Let’s talk comfortably.”



“Yes, I understand. Why are my eyes...”

“Don’t worry too much. It is just a safety device. It will be tiresome if there is some trouble.”

The tuxedo suit that Tae-hyuk was wearing now had been made using his leather jacket and Counterfeit. It would last exactly 300 seconds. It was impossible to make something else with it using the Forgery skill, so no matter how fast he used the skill, he wouldn’t be able to prevent his clothes from suddenly changing.

‘Originally, I wanted to finish this in five minutes. But it seems like the situation is more complicated than I thought.

He sent a message to An Eun-young using his phone. A reply came back in less than 10 seconds.

–Hmm, I suddenly had to go home so I will be leaving first. I’m really sorry.

Fortunately, it seemed possible to investigate the imitation art without a time limit.

“First of all, I want to ask Director something. The Rubens painting displayed here is a fake, a finely crafted fake. Do you know anything about it?”

“T-That can’t be. The exhibition here is scheduled to be displayed for two months with the cooperation of the Hermitage Museum in Russia... Surely there wouldn’t be anything wrong?”

Tae-hyuk had wondered if Kim Hyun-do was Red Mafia’s accomplice. He was suspicious because there was no publicity, despite displaying one of Rubens works. It was as if he didn’t want a lot of guests here.

“Hrmm.”

Tae-hyuk looked around the director’s room. He could see the personality of the person by looking at their room. First of all, the room was very tidy. The broom in the corner indicated he cleaned it directly.

‘A very neat and meticulous person.’

Then he noticed a book that was on the desk. It turned out to be A Dog of Flanders, a book where Rubens’ painting appeared. Tae-hyuk went through the desk and found some additional clues. On the calendar, there was a museum schedule written by Kim Hyun-do.

‘He is inviting kindergarten and elementary school children nearby to see the painting for free.’

By default, the art museum belonged to S University and operated with the aid of the university.

‘His financial status is also clean. This means...’

Considering all the information, Kim Hyun-do was very sincere in operating this museum. Tae-hyuk finally said,

“You like A Dog of Flanders.”

“Yes. It has been my favourite novel since I was a child. I applied to be the director of an art museum before I wanted to make other children feel the same emotions. Fortunately, I was able to acquire a Rubens painting for this museum... I was so excited that I couldn’t sleep properly for several days.”

It was the reason why he had been dozing off.

With this, Tae-hyuk was convinced that Kim Hyun-do wasn’t related to Red Mafia. If he was wrong...

‘No. I trust my judgment. Director Kim Hyun-do isn’t a criminal.’

Tae-hyuk released Kim Hyun-do’s blindfold.

“How long until the other guards return?”

“There are around 20 minutes.”

“Then I’ll finish it before that. First, let’s take a look at the Rubens painting.”

“You didn’t come to blow this place up?”

“I told you. I came to help you.”

Kim Hyun-do was still confused.

The man called Phantom wasn’t a simple criminal. The two people headed to where the Rubens painting was displayed.

Tae-hyuk said,

“Looking again, it really is well-made. The parchment it is drawn on is actually more than 500 years old. It really looks like an old masterpiece, but I would like to take a closer look.”

“Yes...”

“For the sake of a perfect masterpiece, a craftsman with considerable ability would have suffered for a few months to create this, so of course they would feel attached to it. Then they will play a joke.”

“I’m sorry, I don’t understand what you mean.”

No matter how he looked, he couldn't find any differences.

“Look at this.”

Tae-hyuk pulled red sunglasses out of his pocket. When he used it, hidden initials showed up.

“Heok... Don't tell me...”

In the painting, some Chinese characters were hidden. It was written with special ink that could only be seen through red glasses.

“I doubt that Rubens would've learned this language. Do you know that that means?”

“.....”

This was a very sophisticated forgery. Rubens paintings were extremely expensive. He left behind more than 2,000 works in his lifetime. Even so, he was still one of the most popular artists when it came to auctions. Rubens' works had one of the best records at the famous auction house Sotherby's.

“T-Then what should I do?”

Tae-hyuk tried to figure out the purpose by combining his

knowledge of the future actions of Red Mafia.

“Maybe they are preparing for a huge scam. Then let’s return to your office to talk more.”

“Yes, I understand.”

He didn’t know when the other guards would return. The situation would become complicated if he was discovered by others.

Tae-hyuk and Kim Hyun-do returned to the original location.

“Would you like a cup of coffee or something?”

“No, I’m fine. First, I will briefly sum up the situation.”

Tae-hyuk wrote down the name Red Mafia on a piece of paper.

“It is the largest criminal organization in Russia. They have committed many crimes in this world.”

“Yes. What are they...?”

“From now on, the secret I will tell you has been classified as a class 1 secret by the CIA.”

“Hup!”

Kim Hyun-do’s eyes widened and he closed his mouth.

“It’s the Red Mafia that runs the Hermitage Museum.”

“O-Oh my god...”

“I think I know what their purpose is. Sooner or later, I think there will be a tremendous amount of imitation art in the world. In particular, there will be a lot of Rubens’ works. There will be no rumours about fakes circulating.”

What if Leonardo da Vinci’s Mona Lisa was copied and released on the market? It was such a famous work that everyone would know it was a fake. But what about Rubens’ the Rape of the Daughters of Leucippus, or Massacre of the Innocents? Few people knew who owned them.

In other words, there were two reasons why the Red Mafia targeted Rubens’ works for this crime. He was a painter of high value who left behind a lot of works.

“Then why was a forgery provided here?”

“To sell a fake, it needs to be made real. The painting would be worth billions of won. They don’t want it compared to the real thing.”

“.....!”

“Soon, there will be more people looking at the painting displayed here for a variety of reasons. They will be completely fooled by the Red Mafia. Director Kim Hyun-do as well. You were used by the Red Mafia without knowing it yourself.”

“Oh god...”

Kim Hyun-do sat down on the spot.

He loved art. Among them, Rubens' paintings were exceptional. He had rejoiced at being able to display it...

But it was all to sell a fake.

“Director won't be hurt if you pretend not to notice anything. I just feel a little bit of conscience. But will it be finished like this? The Rubens that they are trying to fake and sell is your favourite painting. Can you just watch knowing that?”

“T-Then what can I do? I'm just an old man who can't do anything.”

“I do have one suggestion.”

“Will it give me a shot at the Red Mafia that deceived me?”



“They will be quite upset by the end of it. You will also get extra income from it.”

“I will do it. I can’t forgive those bastards who defiled Rubens’ name.”

Tae-hyuk smiled and explained his plan to Kim Hyun-do, who felt faint as he heard the whispers of a devil.

## Chapter 88 – Genius And Genius #4

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Lee Shi-hyun's job was to appraise artwork, mainly dealing in paintings and pottery. She was regarded as one of the best in the industry due to her knowledge and sharp eye. Recently, the growing number of forgery crimes had resulted in the police preparing a special countermeasures team, and Lee Shi-hyun had been working as a consultant there for a while.

This morning, someone trying to smuggle a large number of forgeries from Russia were arrested, and many Rubens were among them. Some of his works were on display at S University's museum. Lee Shi-hyun had been ordered to go there and see if there was anything suspicious. No matter how expensive a forgery was sold for, it was nothing compared to the value of the original. It was possible that the reason for the smuggling was to swap the real one with the fake.

It was amazing that his paintings were displayed in Korea. If the painting on display was a fake then it meant there was an accomplice among the museum officials. Either the S University museum or the Hermitage Museum that provided the paintings.

She didn't know which one it was but the range of investigation was definitely reduced. So she rushed to investigate before the painting was taken away.

Upon arriving at S University, Lee Shi-hyun met Joo Hyun-ho, who was waiting for her.

“Hello. I am Lee Shi-hyun.”

“Inspector spoke to me. I am Investigator Joo Hyun-ho.”

Lee Shi-hyun felt like his face was strangely familiar, despite meeting him for the first time. She had definitely seen him somewhere...

“Did you participate in the Mafia Game before?”

“Eh? Shi-hyun as well? It was a cable broadcasting show that did have even 1% audience ratings so not many people would recognize me.”

“Yes! There are some surprising fanatics. Even now, people are still asking for a second season.

“I see. But it is better seeing it in person instead of on the TV.”

“I don’t like flashing lights so...”

“Do you want to see it now?”

Lee Shi-hyun laughed at Joo Hyun-ho’s words.

“You won’t be able to get anything out of this ajumma.”

“Aye, what ajumma? You are now single.”

Lee Shi-hyun’s eyes widened. She had divorced three years after her marriage and now lived alone.

“How did you know?”

Hyun-ho laughed and pointed to Shi-hyun’s left finger.

“There is a mark on the finger of your left hand, a sign that you were wearing something there for a long time. Isn’t that the finger for the wedding ring? But it has almost disappeared so you didn’t just take the ring off. It means you haven’t been wearing the ring for a month. In other words, Lee Shi-hyun has recently divorced and is now single.”

“That is right. How amazing. In addition, it has been exactly a month since I got divorced... Investigator-nim needed just one look to tell?”

“Haha. This is my hobby.”

It was the basis of criminal profiling to look at a person’s appearance or attire to guess their situation or psychological state. But there was no one who did it for everyone they met on a regular basis like Joo Hyun-ho.

Joo Hyun-ho wasn’t simply a genius because his head was good. It was a result of his habit of analyzing everyone due to his

aesthetic and paranoid tastes.

“Then let’s go. I’m sorry for the director but he can’t help being a suspect. Will it take a long time?”

“It won’t be that long.”

“Oh, I’ll be happy to take your bag. Are they the tools required for the appraisal?”

“...Yes, thank you.”

Joo Hyun-ho took the bag and started walking, Lee Shi-hyun smiling as she gazed after him. He wasn’t as much of a genius as she thought. He didn’t notice that she was a spy planted by the Red Mafia.

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“I’m sorry to see you again for something like this.”

“No. If there are any doubts then it is better to make sure.”

“Can you turn off the security system so that Lee Shi-hyun can enter?”

“Ah, yes... Please wait a moment.”

After arriving at the museum, Joo Hyun-ho and Lee Shi-hyun explained the matter to Kim Hyun-do and asked for his understanding. If the Rubens painting in the museum was a fake, then he would be held as a key suspect.

Joo-Hyun-ho said,

“Director, you seem very nervous. Do you know something?”

Then Kim Hyun-do’s fingers shook for a moment.

“Anybody would be nervous in this situation.”

“Haha. Is that right? Even if Director-nim was only used by the Russian mafia, you could be framed. At any rate, just trust me and watch quietly.”

“Yes, I understand.”

Kim Hyun-do... No, Tae-hyuk who changed his face using the Disguise skill, inwardly sighed.

‘Psychology truly isn’t a joke. I think I did well. If this was Kim Hyun-do then he might have already given away that he met Phantom.’

The police had come here to investigate the artworks. After becoming aware of this face, Tae-hyuk immediately wore Kim

Hyun-do's clothes and used Disguise. Although there was some difference in height, that was solved by putting in some insoles.

‘The police moved faster than I thought.’

He didn't know how great Lee Shi-hyun's skills were. Even if she didn't notice that the painting was a fake, she should see the initials. Then she would know it was a forgery, and would undo the Red Mafia's plan. Maybe this incident would end up with the police's victory, even if he watched from a distance.

However, then Kim Hyun-do's position as director would be troubled. A forgery was being displayed in the museum that he managed. He would be suspected as an accomplice of the Red Mafia.

Tae-hyuk was given permission to touch [Machina] that was displayed in a special area in exchange for stopping it. If the police exposed the fact that the painting was a fake then he wouldn't be able to see Machina.

However, he couldn't help the Red Mafia. If the painting was a fake then the police would laugh, but it would be a little difficult for Tae-hyuk. If the result was that it was real, the Red Mafia would gain enormous profits.

Tae-hyuk had purchased some information from Big Mama a few days ago.

In four years, Tae-hyuk would be framed for killing Park Jung-hwan. But Park Jung-hwan actually died two years ago, which didn't make sense. In order to reveal the truth of the incident, he created the virtual criminal called Phantom.

By the way, foreign criminal organizations might be involved in Park Jung-hwan's death.

‘Russia's Red Mafia, China's Triad and Japan's Yakuza... The real culprit of the upcoming war is hiding among them.’

Tae-hyuk had smashed one of the businesses of the Triad. Maybe everything that he thought was a coincidence was actually a unified event. Therefore, he didn't want to do anything that would benefit the Red Mafia.

‘Still, do I have no choice but to cooperate with the Red Mafia here?’

Tae-hyuk's worry was solved in a strange manner. Lee Shi-hyun, who was looking at Rubens' work with tools from her bag, had taken out a strange object. It was a pair of red sunglasses, a fashion item with a primitive design. The lens were covered with scratches from where it had been carelessly placed in the bag.

Tae-hyuk approached Lee Shi-hyun and asked her,

“What is the result?”



“I think it will take a little longer to find out. However, the parchment paper is actually 500 years old and the ink is exactly the same as the original. I think Director-nim can rest assured.”

“It is the real painting?”

“Yes.”

“Then are those your red sunglasses? They look colorful.”

“Ahaha. They are mine. I’m a bit careless with them right?”

‘It is her job to manage things like that... It smells fishy.’

Tae-hyuk knew that the hidden initials on the fake could be identified with red lenses. But why would she carry something and not use it? In addition, he had been watching her work and she seemed to have concluded that it was an original from the beginning.

‘There is a high possibility that she is a spy planted by the Red Mafia.’

Tae-hyuk finally figured out the Red Mafia’s plan. Perhaps they allowed a smuggler of forgeries to be arrested in order to make the police move. After the police found the fakes, they would start an investigation. The police would act to appraise the paintings. Then the spy they planted would judge it as genuine and attach a certificate. After that, it could be traded for a vastly higher price.

But it would only work if the appraiser was a spy planted by the Red Mafia.

‘They intended for there to be an investigation so that an authenticity label would be placed on their fakes.’

Tae-hyuk got goosebumps. The boss of the Red Mafia was very smart. At that moment, Joo Hyun-ho interrupted Tae-hyuk and Lee Shi-hyun.

“So this painting is the real thing?”

“Yes. It isn’t 100% but the possibility is high that it is real.”

Tae-hyuk worried about whether he should inform the investigator wearing a trench coat that this woman was a spy, but there was no need to do so.

“I am convinced after your answer. You are a spy planted by the Red Mafia.”

“Huh? W-What are you talking about?”

Lee Shi-hyun exclaimed with a flustered face.

“In 1991, a large number of forgeries were manufactured in Russia and spread throughout the world. The way they did that was to put spies in other countries to make the fakes seem real.

The level of perfection was high, but as the operation became more complicated, they were caught.

“Ah, no. I don’t know who the Red Mafia is.”

Joo Hyun-ho explained with a confident look.

“I was suspicious from the moment I met you. No, to be precise, I live with the suspicion that everyone I meet is a criminal. First of all, Lee Shi-hyun made two mistakes.”

In a short amount of time, Joo Hyun-ho had asked the investigations department to secure a copy of her resident registration. She had submitted it to the department after becoming an adviser. On it, Lee Shi-hyun had written that she had never been married.

“.....”

“You have never married, but you said you went through a divorce? That means you weren’t married in South Korea. Then from where? Moscow?”

“.....”

“And the second mistake. You worried about the bag for 0.2 seconds before handing it to me. I’m sure it was to give me your tools in order to avoid doubts... However, isn’t it the same as asking a soldier for the gun?”

The tools for an artisan were like children to them. Who would leave it to someone else to carry due to being a little tired?

Lee Shi-hyun sat down on the spot.

“Aha... Ahaha! Did you say that you are Joo Hyun-ho? It seems you really are a genius. This was a perfect reasoning. By the way... Did you mention 1991? That’s why you found me so easily. Remembering that far back... Really amazing.”

Joo Hyun-ho spoke while handcuffing Lee Shi-hyun.

“Oh, I’m sorry but what I said about 1991 was a lie.”

“What?”

“I needed to create doubt to make the suspect easily confess.”

“T-This demon, you tricked me!”

Joo Hyun-ho smiled and brought Lee Shi-hyun’s fingers to his lips.

“I am a bad guy whose specialty is lying to women.

Thus, the Red Mafia’s spy was caught in Joo Hyun-ho’s trap.

“Ah, Director. Sorry for the disturbance. I will report to the inspector and come back with another appraiser.”

“You will come again?”

“Yes. I have to make sure.”

Tae-hyuk looked at Joo Hyun-ho. He was a man wearing Detective Columbo’s trademark trench coat. The technique of reading the opponent’s psychology was his best aspect. Either way, the Red Mafia spy was arrested. In a few days, another appraiser would come and this would be discovered as a fake. Then could he use this?

‘Wait... Can’t I do that?’

Tae-hyuk inwardly smiled.

The Red Mafia’s plan had been destroyed, and he thought of a brilliant way to save Kim Hyun-do, a decent person. If it was successful then he would be able to get his hands on Machina.

Tae-hyuk slowly opened his mouth.

“Can you please listen to what I have to say?”

## Chapter 89 – Genius And Genius #5

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“Oh my god... Then everything was manipulated...”

Kim Do-shik sighed as he listened to Joo Hyun-ho’s report. He never thought that a criminal organization would have planted a spy within the police. It was like someone unseen was pointing a gun at his back.

“But you are truly amazing. How did you know that Lee Shi-hyun was lying? I was also tricked.”

“That is because I am a genius.”

“Then why are you broken by that Phantom bastard?”

Kim Do-shik’s words caused Joo Hyun-ho to tremble. He had a showdown with Phantom over the bombs and was fully defeated.

“Well, isn’t that the same for everyone?”

On that day, the police had been puppets dancing on the stage prepared by Phantom. Joo Hyun-ho had been so mentally wounded by the event that he couldn’t eat properly for a while. However, he had such an optimistic personality that his childhood nickname was Beagle. Thanks to that, he recovered quickly.

“But Phantom is being surprisingly quiet.”

“That’s right. He hasn’t appeared after the broadcast.”

“There is a possibility that he might’ve gone overseas.”

“Speaking of overseas... The place that Phantom blew up...”

Joo Hyun-ho was thinking about T Medical Centre that Phantom broke. They were in business with the Chinese mafia, the Triads.

“Yes. The Chinese mafia.”

Kim Do-shik raised his finger. Furthermore, there was a Red Mafia crime shortly after that incident.

“If Japan’s Yakuza show up here, then all three forces will gather in Korea. If there is a fight against Phantom... If this continues, something huge will happen in Korea.”

“It is our job to prevent it. I have obtained the complete cooperation from Incheon International Airport. I am worried.”

“At any rate, if Phantom shows back up then I will surely catch him this time.”

“Haha... I wish that would happen. The pressure from above to catch Phantom is no joke right now. Have you gone to take a look at the Phantom of the Opera?”

“Hmm... Why? I already know it.”

“At any rate, you are the main investigator. Aren’t you responsible for it now?”

“Yes.”

“Then try to profile the people working at the police station. Make up some excuse for it. Perhaps a rough psychological counseling? Normally it would cost 100,000 won, but it would be nice if you offered it for free. Come to think of it, I don’t think you have a psychologist license.”

The confused Joo Hyun-ho stuttered out,

“T-That is because I graduated from another course at university.”

He was good at profiling, but there were over 100 people working at this police station. It would take 50 hours to talk with them for 30 minutes.

“Why, don’t you want to do it?”

Hyun-ho sighed,

“No, I’ll do it. It is true that a competent person is too busy to



breathe.”

It seems that it will be hard to go home from work on time for a while.

“At any rate, I found a trustworthy person so you just focus on the profiling.”

“Umm... I understand.”

Kim Do-shik spoke confidently.

This time, he made sure that he selected a very competent appraiser. Unfortunately, the new appraiser that Kim Do-shik selected was also a Red Mafia spy.

---

“Is it really okay?”

Kim Hyun-do looked at the opera mask that Tae-hyuk was wearing with an uneasy expression.

“I showed you my skills.”

Tae-hyuk pointed to the Rubens hanging on the wall of the director’s office. Before fully embarking on the mission, he had copied the Rubens painting. Then he showed the final product to

Kim Hyun-do. Although Kim Hyun-do had no professional knowledge, he had the experience of living and working with paintings all throughout his life.

“Even though it is a fake, sometimes the fake can seem real.”

Kim Hyun-do nodded quietly.

Tae-hyuk’s plan was simple. The Red Mafia would once again send a spy as the appraiser, and the painting displayed here would unconditionally become authentic. After that, the Red Mafia would release their fakes onto the market. Those who thought they bought the genuine one would flock to compare it to the Rubens painting on display at S University’s museum.

This was what Tae-hyuk was aiming for: to paint his fake on top of the Red Mafia’s. Of course, there would be very small changes to the composition of brush strokes and oil paint.

‘If the fake I made becomes real, then the Red Mafia’s plan would be completely smashed.’

Tae-hyuk said nothing as he looked at Kim Hyun-do. Sometimes silence was more convincing than 100 words.

“I understand. If you are able to thwart the Red Mafia’s plan then I will cooperate.”

Tae-hyuk nodded with a satisfied expression. In order to do that,

he first had to recover the fake hanging in the museum. Guards patrolled the museum 24 hours a day. Even if the security device was released using Kim Hyun-do's master key, he had to avoid being seen.

Tae-hyuk looked at the forgery of the Rubens painting that he had already drawn.

“Well. You can hang that instead.”

“It is painted on drawing paper. Won't it be noticed when touched?”

“A security guard would know not to get close to the painting due to the security devices.”

“Ah...”

Kim Hyun-do nodded with a convinced expression. The fake that Tae-hyuk was hard to distinguish from the original without touching it. The guards couldn't get close so it was perfect to deceive them.

“I heard about the guard's patrol route so I will take care of that. Then exactly seven minutes later, turn off the security system for one minute. In the meantime, I will switch the paintings.”

“I understand.”

Tae-hyuk's plan progressed smoothly and he was able to obtain the fake made by the Red Mafia. Kim Hyun-do opened his mouth once he saw it.

"You succeeded. I'm glad you don't have a bad heart. If you did, all the museums in the country would be wiped out."

"Then I will start."

Tae-hyuk made his own studio in the director's office. The estimated work time on the Demon Revealing Mirror was 120 minutes.

[Forgery has been used.]

-Analyzing the specified artwork.

[A forgery of 'Descent from the Cross'.]

-A craftsman with great skill has copied and painted Rubens 'Descent from the Cross.'

-The detailed information is hidden because the rating is too low.

-Tools needed: Pigment, colour, soluble oil...

‘The opponent is someone who is superior to me in forgery. Perhaps even more than Big Mama... The Russian mafia has huge monsters.’

Tae-hyuk admired the opponent’s skills, and couldn’t help wondering who made this. If his rating was higher then would it be possible to know that information? Unfortunately, he didn’t even know the conditions to upgrade to a ‘King’.

In the future, he would definitely have a confrontation with the mafia. The criminals on the blacklist were heinous criminals, but they were mainly just individuals. However, the mafia was a criminal group that boasted tremendous power. A hint to become a ‘king’ might be hiding in the fight against them.

Once the crime skill was activated, Tae-hyuk’s body started moving at a tremendous speed.

“Oh god... Is that the movement of a human?”

Kim Hyun-do stared at Tae-hyuk with a blank expression. Tae-hyuk’s hands moved at a tremendous speed. However, there was no change in the painting. It was a great thing. He was putting pigments on the painting but the place where his brush passed was still the same. Kim Hyun-do wouldn’t have believed it if he wasn’t seeing it with his own eyes.

“Phantom... You...”

After two hours, Tae-hyuk looked at his work with a satisfied expression. He didn't touch the things that the Red Mafia's artist used to make it look like an old masterpiece. However, the color of the Phantom was coming out. This was now the work of Phantom instead of the Red Mafia.

The Demon Revealing Mirror popped up in front of Tae-hyuk.

‘Huh?’

[A great work of art has been completed.]

-Dexterity has increased by 1.

-You have exceeded the 100% limit and a new attribute is born.

[The Hawk Eyes attribute can be learnt.]

‘Hawk Eyes?’

It seemed like something new had been added to the attributes that formerly could only be raised by affinity points. When he checked, the Spying skill was shining.

[Hawk Eyes]

-Able to see the abilities of the specified target in detail.

-If the other person is using a pseudonym then you can confirm their true name.

-Necessary affinity points required: 10

Tae-hyuk's eyes widened. The Hawk Eyes attribute could increase the number of details that he saw. If he learned it, then the uses for it were endless.

‘Is this DLC (downloadable content)... Shouldn't a great ability like this be the default? By the way, I didn't know that Forgery would strengthen Spying. Indeed, there is truly something about the growth of the crime skills.’

His skills had been constantly growing after becoming a Noble.

‘Voice Modulation evolved into Disguise. Now a new Spying added. What the hell is the criteria?’

Tae-hyuk licked his lips. As Phantom stared into the air for a while, Kim Hyun-do asked in a quivering voice.

“I-Is it completed?”

“Yes. It is perfect. Now I just need to put this back in the original place.”

“Is it truly possible to destroy the Red Mafia’s plan with this?”

“Very interesting things will happen soon. Director Kim Hyun-do, you should eat popcorn while you’re watching.”

“P-Popcorn?”

After repeating what he did two hours ago, Tae-hyuk’s imitation was displayed in S University’s museum. Tae-hyuk muttered as he watched it.

“This time, there is no flashy reversal or colourful explosions. That is why it is even more enjoyable. From now on, it’s showtime.”

---

A few days later, as Phantom said, another appraiser showed up. After spending one hour looking at the Rubens, he said with a



smile.

“This is authentic.”

Director Kim Hyun-do swallowed his saliva. It meant that the person in front of him was a spy from the Red Mafia. It felt like he exposed to the dark side of the world. Phantom’s presence felt even scarier.

The next day, a huge number of VIPs from all over the world came to the museum where Kim Hyun-do worked.

“Hello? I am James Trevor, a spokesperson for Pineapple.”

The blonde man, James, smiled brightly and shook Kim Hyun-do’s hand. He was very fluent in Korean for an American. Pineapple was an industry giant famous for their smartphones, so Kim Hyun-do was stunned by their visit.

“I heard that you have Rubens’ Descent of the Cross on display? I got permission from the Hermitage Museum. Can I look at the painting directly for a while?”

In the first place, the Rubens painting was from the Hermitage Museum. If they gave permission, then Kim Hyun-do couldn’t say no. Kim Hyun-do contacted the director of the Hermitage Museum and told him that James had come. Then he heard that it was okay to show the painting.

“He has confirmed it. I will turn the security devices off for a while.”

James told the man standing behind him something in English. Then the man nodded and started to look at the Rubens painting.

How much time passed? The man looking at the Rubens painting turned pale. He walked over to James and whispered something in his ear.

“WHAT?! SON OF BITCH!!!”

James, who was wearing a neat suit, pulled at his tie, and started screaming curses. He left the museum without a proper goodbye and called someone. Kim Hyun-do didn't speak English, but he seemed to know what the man was saying.

This...

-It is Mr James. The painting we purchased is a fake.

That would obviously be the content of the call.

After James left, three Arab oil kings and a wealthy person from China appeared in front of Kim Hyun-do. If all their possessions were combined, then it would be possible to buy a country. Kim Hyun-do felt like he was losing his mind. And the reactions of the guests were all the same.

“I heard curse words from all over the world today.”

Kim Hyun-do laughed.

The Red Mafia was screwed. It grew very big. Thanks to Phantom, the billions of dollars they would've earned had turned into tissue paper. The boss of the Red Mafia would know what it was like to be struck from heaven. It was literally a disaster.

# Chapter 90 – Big Brother's Raid #1

---

“Did you enjoy seeing the people?”

Kim Hyun-do was as happy as he was when he was a child.

“I didn't expect so many people to come. I met some of the world's richest people today.”

Tae-hyuk inwardly sighed,

The Red Mafia plot to sell fakes of the Rubens painting had been smashed by Phantom. If he got Machine and left then it would be the end. However, the remaining people here would be the target of the Red Mafia.

“Director Kim Hyun-do. Not long after, the Red Mafia will come looking for you.”

“R-Really? Don't worry Phantom. I absolutely won't say that you came here.”

Tae-hyuk shook his head, as Kim Hyun-do would be in danger if he did so. If they didn't know who the enemy was, then they would target the innocent people here.

“No. Tell them that everything is Phantom's doing.”

“Huh?”

“So that you can be safe.”

“H-Heok...!”

Kim Hyun-do's eyes widened as he looked at Phantom. A man who he simply thought of as a criminal was worrying about him. Despite the mask, Phantom seemed to be gently smiling. Tae-hyuk laughed as he realized that Kim Hyun-do's heart was now his.

“I would be a villain if I discard my ally.”

In the future, S University would continue to do research into artificial body parts, Machina. He could do this much lip service if it meant that he could keep having access to it.

“Then can you please show my Machina as promised?”

“Understood!”

Kim Hyun-do cried out in enthusiasm.

They arrived at the special exhibition hall of the museum. It was a place to release the results of projects from the laboratories. It was in order to get funds for their research.

“The artificial body Machina is displayed in that area.”

“Thank you. You have been very useful.”

Kim Hyun-do wondered while Phantom would be interested in Machina. By linking the nerves, humans could control the machine using their will. Although it was listed as a new chapter in biomechanics, it was still in its infancy stage. The result was slightly better than normal.

‘It would be nice if he told me why he needed the Machina.’

As he thought that, Tae-hyuk opened up,

“You know that a while ago, I blew up some organ trafficking.

“Of course. There was a lot of excitement about Phantom’s actions”

There was some criticism but Kim Hyun-do didn’t mention it.

“Then you will know that the children lost one of their body parts. I didn’t want it to end with just rescuing them from hell. Humans can live due to hope.”

Kim Hyun-do almost coughed.

Most people were enthusiastic about the fact that Phantom hit a criminal organization. He also thought that. But Phantom was working to heal the wounds of those who suffered... He even risked becoming enemies with the Red Mafia, a huge organization.

“Ohh... Phantom...”

Tae-hyuk laughed at Kim Hyun-do's reaction. His original purpose for giving Soo-bin Machina was so that Kang-suk and Haran could date. Then he got the information that Park Jung-hwan and the mafia were related. He didn't know what type of forces they had, but it was certain that he would need to confront them. He just pulled it forward a little bit.

‘It is also good at introducing Phantom.’

Without the masked criminal, he wouldn't be able to face the mafia. Tae-hyuk went to where Machina was displayed. The mannequin had a mechanical arm. He tested it with Spying to see if Forgery would work.

[A new attribute has been added to Forgery]

-Trace (Functional Copy) can now be used.

-It is possible to reproduce not only the appearance, but also the function.

-It is automatically acquired thanks to the skill proficiency of over 100%.

‘Automatically acquired?! Wow, what a complete benefit!’

A significant amount of affinity points was required to add an attribute. In order to do that, he needed to catch blacklist members faster so he could save more victims, but he obtained this for free. Furthermore, the ability was enormous. If he had the materials then he would be able to build a spaceship.

[Forgery has been used.]

-Analyzing the specified artwork.

[Machine Body Machina ver 0.11]

-Electronic signals move the machine.

-It is a prototype and needs improvement.

-The detailed information is hidden because the rating is too low.



-Tools needed: Titanium alloy, stainless steel, CP1Z...

‘W-Wait a minute...’

Tae-hyuk stared blankly at the messages that started to rise on the Demon Revealing Mirror.

[Insufficient driving motor materials.]

[Insufficient housing materials.]

.....

30,000 parts were needed to make a car. Machina needed around 2,000 parts. Basically, there was a driving system that moved the arm and the housing that formed the outer surface. In addition, there was a central processing device that accepted and processed electrical signals. The container made of titanium alloy and stainless steel could be easily made. However, the problem lied in the driving system and central processing device.

‘It isn’t at a level that can be made even if I have the materials!’

Tae-hyuk sighed.

Kim Hyun-do, watching from the sidelines, asked with a worried expression.

“Can you create it?”

“Of course. It is a very easy thing for me.”

Tae-hyuk laughed.

He took exactly two weeks to collect all the materials.

---

“Kuheok...”

Tae-hyuk’s eyes became moist as he saw the finished Machina.

How much trouble did he go through to make this happen? Even though he had the crime skills, he couldn’t create something from nothing. In the end, he needed to get all the parts individually. Many of them were things that weren’t sold on the market.

In the end, he ended up getting Big Mama’s help. It was an enormous amount of money, even through the black market. But eventually, it was completed.

Thanks to the artificial skin, it really looked like a human arm from a distance.

“This is the Machina ver 0.12?”

Tae-hyuk called Kim Soo-bin from the warehouse he borrowed as a workshop. He naturally used the name Phantom.

–Come over there? Are you going to do anything strange...?

“There is something I want to give you.”

–Huh?

“If possible, please come alone.”

Kim Soo-bin had now recovered enough to walk around without the help of others, but there was a lump attached to her. Tae-hyuk licked his lips.

“I thought I told you to come alone.”

Song Hye-mi was attached to Kim Soo-bin’s side. Was she nervous about meeting a criminal who turned South Korea upside down? Her hands were trembling.

“Unni’s body is uncomfortable.”

“I understand. It can’t be helped if you are her guardian.”

Tae-hyuk patted Song Hye-mi's head before turning on the lights of the warehouse.

“Huh? You are a surprisingly good person...?”

Song Hye-mi looked at Phantom's back with a blank expression. She had come prepared to defend her sister. However, his reaction was unexpectedly tender. She thought he would be a demon-like person from hell...

There was a mannequin inside the warehouse.

Kim Soo-bin asked,

“It doesn't seem like you are planning a fashion show. What's with the mannequin?”

Tae-hyuk pulled out the smartphone that contained the Machina app and activated the stored motion. Then the mannequin's arm started moving.

“Wah...”

“W-What the?”

The Machina unbuttoned its clothes, tied a shoelace, and poured water into a cup. They were actions that were hard to do with one

hand.

Tears dripped from Kim Soo-bin's eyes as she realized what it meant.

“T-This is a gift...?”

Tae-hyuk took Machina off the mannequin and said,

“Yes. This will be your arm from now on.”

Unfortunately, it was impossible to connect the nerves and move them freely. The movements had to be registered in advance on the smartphone. However, just that alone would be a tremendous help.

“From now on, this is going to be my arm...”

Kim Soo-bin gently patted the Machina. There was the distinctive coldness of metal, but it was strangely warm.

“I'm sorry but I didn't say it was for free.”

Surely he didn't want money?

Song Hye-mi exclaimed.

“W-We don’t have money!”

“Huhu... I’m sorry but there is something else more important.

“D-Don’t tell me...!”

Song Hye-mi’s face turned bright red. It seemed like there was a strange misunderstanding. Kim Soo-bin had taken off her outerwear so that the Machina could be installed. It was obviously embarrassing to be standing in her underwear in front of a man.

However, he didn’t have the slightest thoughts about that.

“What I want is data. The Machina will continue to develop in the future, so I will test every version with Kim Soo-bin’s body.”

Kim Soo-bin laughed as she sat down on the chair prepared by Tae-hyuk.

“...It would be nice if you were a little honest.”

The work of attaching the Machina was over. It was originally designed so that it could move freely through willpower without any other aids. But a significant amount of time was required for it to develop into that. Of course, Tae-hyuk would be eating popcorn and watching the research.

“Be patient even if it hurts a little bit.”

The Machine was firmly attached to the cut surface of the body. Most of the pain came from the healed flesh being torn again.

“...Yes, this is nothing. I had my arm cut off without anesthesia, after all.”

He had checked Kim Soo-bin’s size in advance so Machina fit her body perfectly. Kim Soo-bin realized this and asked,

“When did you examine my body?”

He couldn’t tell her that when she was at his house a while ago, he fed her sleeping pills and measured her size.

“I can tell just by looking.”

“Hrmm...”

Kim Soo-bin gazed at the masked Phantom suspiciously, but she couldn’t see what expression the person inside was making.

“This is how it moves.”

Tae-hyuk installed the Machina app on Soo-bin’s smartphone. There were 10,000 movements required in real life installed.

Kiririk!

There was the sound of gears turning and Machina, Kim Soo-bin's right arm moved.

“Now I have to oil the arm every morning.”

“I made a manual for it so please read it carefully. In particular, you should always pay attention to warmth. If you go outside without any equipment in winter then it might become icy and stop working.”

“Thank you Phantom.”

“Then you can go back. I will send you a message if I need to contact you in the future.”

Hye-mi, who was hiding behind Soo-bin, stuck her head out and said.

“I want to say something to Phantom. Thank you for saving Unni...”

“Huh? I'm sorry but I didn't hear it well.”

“Thank you!”



Hye-mi was embarrassed and hid behind Soo-bin again. The scars inflicted by the organ trafficking incident would never disappear. However, Kim Soo-bin now had a new arm, and would be able to hold Hye-mi's hand.

Tae-hyuk looked at the two people leaving with a small smile. It seemed like the Doll Play incident was completely finished now.

“Phantom! Sorry but could you open this?”

Kim Soo-bin asked as she got to the locked warehouse door.

“Just wait. I'll open it soon.”

“Ah, no. I can open it. I want to test the power of the arm that Phantom gave me!”

Kim Soo-bin manipulated Machina so it would open the shutter. It seemed like she thought that the shutters were just down.

“W-Wait a minute! There is a lock...!”

The confused Tae-hyuk cried out but it was too late..

Crunch!

Machina completely ruined the iron shutters and the lock.

“Oh my god...”

He wanted her to live a strong life, but it seemed to be a bit too strong.

---

A new stewardess on a plane departing from China muttered as she watched the first class passengers.

“He looks like a movie star... “What does Unni think?”

The senior stewardess next to her replied.

“Yes. Unbelievably handsome.”

“I think he has a lot of money. The clothes he is wearing are all brand names.”

“Furthermore, he is in his mid-30s...”

The stewardess spent most of her days on a plane. As a result, she couldn't go on blind dates once she was at a marriageable age. Thus, she used to actively dash at young men in the business seats.

However, the customer in front of her was sitting in the first class seats. In business class, there were many people who had to

go on business trips quickly, but there was no room in economy. But first class was different. If someone wasn't born with a gold spoon, it would be hard for them to buy it easily since it cost a large amount of money.

“Business is bad right now so he is the only one in first class... Isn't this a big hit?”

“Dom Perignon 2004? Take the whole bottle.”

It was the best champagne served only to first class guests.

“U-Unni. Perhaps...”

“I am definitely serving him.”

“How petty! I saw him first!”

“I am turning 30 next year. There is an urgent fire.”

“Hiing... I understand.”

The senior stewardess fixed her makeup in the hand mirror. Then armed with her best smile, she headed to the first class customer.

After five minutes, the senior stewardess returned with a face full

of smiles.

“What should I do? Too amazing. He is a complete gentleman.”

“Did you get his number?”

“Hah! I got his business card.”

The senior stewardess proudly extended a black card.

“Let’s see... Is he a second generation chaebol? Or an actor?”

“Maybe he is both!”

The business card contained one word in Chinese and a phone number.

“Big Brother?” (Chinese)

“H-Hyung-nim?”

The stewardesses panicked. There was nothing that stated the person’s identity.

“I still want to contact him. The customer bought a one-way ticket. He is obviously going to spend a long time in South Korea.”

“Unni, please ask if he has any friends.”

While the stewardesses were gossiping, he was drinking his glass.

““Um... Good... It is a good drink.”

Big Brother smelled the champagne that the stewardess had brought and opened his briefcase and looked at the profile of the target.

“Phantom. There is also a strange person in South Korea.”

Big Brother, the best killer from the Triads, arrived in Korea.

“First of all, I should meet Shin Se-ho from ABS Station.”

Big Brother laughed and poured the champagne down his throat.

# Chapter 91 – Big Brother's Raid #2

---

The Red Mafia was a Russian crime organization. Decades ago, they were a hydra with multiple heads, and were notorious for committing all types of evil deeds throughout the world. They would incorporate the beliefs of [Zvezda](#), the symbol of the Ivankov family.

(Zvezda= star in Russian apparently).

After a bloody struggle, he became the godfather with tens of thousands of members. Ivankov recruited Soviet troops, who had been unemployed since the collapse of the Soviet Union, into his large organization. Then he acquired large quantities of scattered weapons to make a private army that he would use as mercenaries in the world's conflict zones.

The war came to an end. Zvezda accumulated tremendous wealth as an arms dealer and mercenary leader. After Ivankov's death, the Hydra's neck that he had cut off, started to regrow. The people that Ivankov trained aimed their guns at each other and conflict swallowed the Red Mafia again.

The difference was that the weapons were guns and missiles, not swords. If the war persisted, only ruin would be left in its wake. Ivankov's legal successor, the young boss Kataros, was well aware of this.

An old castle, Winter, hundreds of kilometres away from Moscow was Zvezda's home. As the name suggested, it was surrounded by white snow all year round.

“Boss. Our plan was completely foiled by Phantom.”

Kataros sat on his office chair and looked at Semon, his second in command. He was a genius with an IQ of 160 and had three doctoral degrees in economics. Since Ivankov had been the boss, Semon had managed the organization's economics and was notorious for weapons smuggling around the world. There were rumors that he could supply submarines, tanks, and nuclear weapons at any time. The only one he bowed to was the boss of Red Mafia, Kataros.

Semon said with an angry face,

“Revenge is necessary. The damage he inflicted is millions of dollars.”

“Killing the Phantom won't make all that come back, Semon.”

“But Kataros, it is dangerous if you ignore this. The other bosses won't stand it.”

Apart from the godfather of the Red Mafia, there were nine representative bosses. Kataros had legitimacy as Ivankov's successor, but his forces were the weakest. He only kept his position due to the absolute support of Semon.

The Red Mafia dealt with high risk crimes such as drugs, prostitution, trafficking, arms trading and casinos. However,

Kataros was interested in the so-called brain business. He supported students who were smart but had no money to study things like law and economics. After graduation, they would work in the Russian mafia.

It took a long time to see the results. Of course, the other bosses objected violently.

Kataros and Semon just prepared it silently.

“The world is changing. I want talent.”

“But it is money that moves the world. If there isn’t a large amount of money available then Boss won’t be able to do what you want. That’s why you started the forgeries...”

He stopped before pointing out that it was the boss’ failure.

“And it failed. I know. Phantom hit us perfectly.”

“So I’ve prepared some extra budget.”

Semon was the man who handled the biggest amount of money among the nine bosses of the Red Mafia. He couldn’t understand why Kataros was refusing his aid.

Kataros said with a laugh,



“I told you. I love talent. It is the same with me. Everything I’m doing is to prove that I am fit for the position of the boss.”

“Ah...”

Kataros had only been one of the nine bosses for one year. He didn’t have any achievements. If this situation persisted then Kataros would be forced out by the other bosses. Of course, it wasn’t like someone being fired from work. Rather, his neck would be sliced and he would be displayed on the streets of Moscow.

“That Phantom person is very interesting. It feels like he enjoys having people play in the palm of his hand.”

“If Boss commands it, then I will cut off his head right away and decorate it in a well-visible place.”

Kataros coughed. Semon was highly loyal but sometimes it was a bit intense.

“Let’s just watch first. We are not the only ones aiming at him.”

“Do you mean the Triads?”

“That’s right. The long-term organ trafficking business they were running was blown up. It seems like the damage is considerable.”

“The damage is bigger here.”

Kataros coughed again. He spoke in a strangely sweet but sarcastic tone.

“They boasted that they sent their strongest killer to South Korea.”

“He bought a lot of weapons from us. A high number of explosives... He can fight a war in order to get Phantom.”

“If Phantom manages to defeat the killer from the Triads, then I will go and see for myself. Maybe he is the person I have been looking for.”

Semon narrowed his eyes.

“South Korea will be set on fire.”

“Yes. The movements of the Triad and the Yakuza are strange. Soon there will be a war.”

Kataros said prophetically.

---

Inside the hotel room, ‘Conquest of Paradise’ was playing. It was classical music that expressed the joy of Columbus discovering the

New World.

Big Brother was moving his body on top of a woman while listening to the music.

“Heok... Heeeok...”

The girl panted roughly before becoming quiet. Big Brother, who had been choking her from above, released his grip. Then the woman’s body flailed like a broken doll.

“So don’t just follow anyone. By the way, what was your name? Well, it doesn’t matter.”

Big Brother inserted his fingers into an eye and pulled out the eyeball. He pulled out a combat knife and cut the connected optic nerve. He always carried a bottle of formalin in his bag. It would be okay as a souvenir.

Big Brother picked up the phone on the floor and called the janitor.

-W-Why weren’t you picking up? What can I do for you?

“There is some garbage to clean in the K Hotel Suite. She hasn’t died yet, so you can sell her.”

-I guess you didn’t have a favorite part this time. Just before...

“Hey. Just do what your job is. If you have a long tongue then I will shorten it.”

–H-Hik! I-I’m really sorry. I understand. Then please have a shower and I will clean it up nicely.

Big Brother went to the shower and turned on the cold water. His body was hot with excitement.

Chwaaaaak!

The icy cold water poured on his head, but it didn’t cool the dark desires in his blood. It was a long trip and he could kill dozens of people.

“Well. It is clean.”

After finishing out the shower, he found that his room was tidy. The bed-sheet that had been dirtied with something red had been changed. The janitor did a good job.

The table had a report that listed everything about his target, Phantom. Big Brother wore a dressing gown and sat down to read it.

“...He touched the Russian mafia? This brat is putting himself out in the open. I should check him out once.”

As he drank wine in the suite, attendants emerged from the darkness. They placed various weapons on the table and disappeared. Big Brother saw the familiar Russian semi-automatic gun Torkarev TT-33 among them. He aimed it at one of the attendants and pulled the trigger.

Tang!

The head of the attendant scattered like a smashed watermelon. The faces of the other attendant turned white. He was terrified of the man who laughed like killing one person was a fun game.

“Hu... Now I am a little calm. I’m sorry but can you call the janitor?”

“Yes! U-Understood!”

The survivor sighed with relief.

Tang tang!

“I’m sorry but I like killing those who think they survived the most.”

After killing the two attendants, Big Brother realized that he had no one to call the janitor.

“Was this a little too much?”

Big Brother laughed.

Anyway, his killing spree was just starting. He laughed like a child receiving a new toy.

---

The Triads had dispatched a skilled killer to catch Phantom. He was armed with a large number of firearms distributed from the Red Mafia. An enemy different from the criminals so far had emerged.

Tae-hyuk didn't know this and was handling the enemies in front of him with a serious expression.

“No... No matter how delicious you tteokbokki is... Isn't it a little too much to make it for all the children in the orphanage?”

The one who spoke was Sister Viviana, a nun who cared for the children at St. Mary's Orphanage.

“I am always thankful. After Hye-mi ate it last time, she was bragging loudly.”

Still, no matter how simple the food, it was more than 30 servings. Tae-hyuk put the sauce into the large pot of boiling rice cakes. He grunted as he started to stir the contents with a large

spatula that was more like a shovel.

“The smell is unbelievably good!”

“I used a good hot pepper paste. And this seasoning...”

Tae-hyuk sprinkled some white powder into the pot. Sister Viviana tilted her head and asked,

“What are you putting in now?”

“It is a secret. Do you know any chefs who would tell their secrets?”

“Ehhh... Surely it isn't cocaine or...”

Tae-hyuk laughed,

This nun... She had a naive face and harsh manner of speaking, He wasn't the Red Mafia, who dealt with such things.

“It is Miwon. MSG is good for your mouth, regardless of your body. Ah right, some people treat it as a crime.”

“Omo. No?”

“Anyway, it is now completed so please help me put it on the

plates.”

“I understand.”

“I can help.”

Kim Soo-bin said from where she was snooping around the kitchen.

“Sister, be careful. It is hot so you might get burnt.”

Kim Soo-bin picked up the pot with her right arm and started to add the rice cakes to the plate.

“This arm, it is strong. It isn’t hot holding something like this, and is quite comfortable.

Fortunately, Kim Soo-bin seemed to like the Machina.

“Speaking of the arm. Would it be better to use it a bit more carefully? It is still a machine.”

“A friend gave it to me so it won’t be respectful if I don’t use it.”

“F-Friend...”

Tae-hyuk sighed. It was good if she liked it.



Kim Soo-bin looked around the orphanage.

“I am leaving here soon, so I wanted to give them a last present.”

“Then you should do it yourself!”

“I don’t cook.”

Kim Soo-bin and Song Hye-mi were leaving the orphanage to stay at Cho Kang-suk’s house. It was only a short time until they graduated school and became self-reliant, but there were still freeloaders in Cho Kang-suk’s house. Thanks to the Machina, Cho Kang-suk could now be at ease when going to catch criminals. Haran also confirmed that they would have the promised date sooner or later.

“Wah! Tteokboki!”

Once dinner was ready, the children entered. Sister Viviana spoke as she watched them eating the delicious food.

“Thank you very much.”

“Did you want to eat the tteokbokki?”

“No, for many other things.”

Sister Viviana smiled like she knew everything. Then all of a sudden, the expression disappeared from Viviana's face. She spoke in a voice that was empty of any emotion.

“There will be many trials for you in the future, but don't worry. Your skills will become even stronger in the future. In the near future, someone will appear asking for help. Don't ignore him. You must definitely take care of him...”

“Eh? Sister Viviana?”

“....Eh? I'm sorry. I must have fallen asleep. Ahaha...”

Sister Viviana blushed like she was embarrassed. Tae-hyuk asked several times about what she just said but she couldn't remember anything.

‘What...? It felt like someone borrowed Viviana's mouth to give me a message... I shouldn't refuse to help?’

Tae-hyuk scratched his head. Viviana's words were strangely embedded in his head.

–Breaking news. In Seoul, a person with guns has taken hostages at a bar.

Tae-hyuk suddenly looked at the TV after hearing the report. It

was clearly an entertainment program being broadcasted...

“A gunman?”

Tae-hyuk approached the TV and listened to the announcer's words.

“I-I'm sorry. We are eating... I'll turn to another channel.”

“No, wait a minute.”

–He has one requirement. If Phantom doesn't appear in front of him within 30 minutes, he will kill the hostages one by one. Phantom. Are you seeing this now? The lives of the hostages depends on you.

Tae-hyuk licked his lips. Such a thing should be left to the police and SWAT team, but why was he looking for Tae-hyuk?

‘I shouldn't ignore the request for help?’

Tae-hyuk thought about what Viviana said once again.

“There is more tteokbokki in the pot if you run out. I have something to see to, so I will go out for a while.”

Tae-hyuk left the orphanage before pulling out the opera mask

and putting it on his head. He didn't know who the killer was, but Tae-hyuk wanted to meet him.

Of course, the price would never be cheap.

## Chapter 92 – Big Brother’s Raid #3

---

Shin Se-ho felt great.

“Hahaha! Drink, drink! I will pay for it today!”

“Can Sunbae really do it?”

“Of course.”

ABS Station’s AD, Kwon Joon-hyuk, pulled the girl sitting next to him closer to him.

“Aish, what is Oppa doing?”

“Shin Se-ho PD... No, this news department head will treat you! Let’s drink!”

Alcohol was consumed and the girl’s breaths smelled of alcohol. The waiter came over with bottles of alcohol and fruit snacks. There was already beer on the table. Then the appetizing snacks were placed down.

“Beer service!”

A female extended some bomb shots to Shin Se-ho and Kwon Joon-hyuk. Shin Se-ho gulped it down with a red face and a breath that was stinking of alcohol.

“Kwon Joon-hyuk! What did I say? Didn’t I say to trust in and follow Hyung?”

Shin Se-ho had been on the rise after revealing the secret hobbies of domestic conglomerates. Soon after, he revealed the truth about the hippo case that the police had been trying to conceal. That alone was tremendous.

Usually, PDs only reported exclusive scoops once or twice a year. However, Shin Se-ho had several jackpots successively.

“There was an exclusive interview with Phantom. How did you get that?”

“I’ll just say it here. I’m close to Phantom., so if I call him, then he will come running right away.”

“Wah...”

Shin Se-ho worked as a PD at ABS Station. As a PD, he had to follow most general events. It had been two years since he started stalking detectives in order to get a scoop. He finally got recognized due to meeting Phantom.

“I was originally going to try other stations, but the chief held my leg and asked for me to remain at ABS Station.”

“Kya! As expected from Shin Se-ho hyung-nim! Now the world recognizes Hyung-nim.”

Shin Se-ho laughed at the compliments and ate the fruit snacks. His title at the station was PD, but now he was promoted up two levels. Starting today, he was a Chief Producer, a CP, not a PD. The CP managed the PDs, and was in charge of the total production of the broadcasts. It could be said that his position would be equivalent to a general executive at other companies.

“I can also use the corporate card that wasn’t available in my PD days.”

Shin Se-ho waved a luxurious gold-plated credit card that was held between his fingers.

Kwon Joon-hyuk hadn’t heard the contents of the deal between Shin Se-ho and Phantom. Why had Phantom given Shin Se-ho the right to interview him? He asked Shin Se-ho, who replied,

“Are you crazy? Do you think I will cut the belly of the duck laying the golden eggs?”

“I-Is that so?”

At that moment, a female grabbed Shin Se-ho’s arm.

“Oppa. Let’s sing. I want to hear 18 Times.”

“Yes.”

The two people went on stage and started singing a slow blues song.

Kwon Joon-hyuk licked his lips. Such a person was now the chief producer. He started to worry about the future of ABS Station.

“Ah, I don’t know. Today is a day to play! Now, let’s go and sing.

“Yes!”

Kwon Joon-hyuk put an arm around a woman’s shoulders and walked towards the stage. Then the door opened and a man in a sharp suit entered. He had such a strong physique that he could be in an action movie right now.

Shin Se-ho, who was playing with the female, turned and looked at the man.

“What? I didn’t call for the waiter.”

The man, who was mistaken as a waiter, looked around the room.

“Are you Shin Se-ho?”



The unpleasant pronunciation showed that he wasn't familiar with Korean.

“Uh, that is me. Did rumors about me already circulate? I am a bit famous. Huhu...”

Shin Se-ho felt proud and took out a 50,000 won bill from his pocket.

“Can you buy me a pack of cigarettes? Marlboro red. You can keep the remaining change as a tip.”

The man... no, Big Brother laughed. He pulled out the Tokarev TT-33 and aimed it at Shin Se-ho's head.

“It seems like I've come to the right place. The tip is for your life.”

Big Brother quietly closed the door and entered. The people inside screamed until their throats were sore. However, it was a place with good soundproofing so the screams didn't escape outside.

---

There were a few reasons why Big Brother chose the karaoke bar as the place to keep the hostages. (In Korea: a karaoke bar has girls working working there, sort of like an escort bar)

It sold alcohol, snacks and other illegal things. Thus, CCTV were installed everywhere to avoid a police crackdown. There were devices installed inside the room and the structure outside was unknown. Instead was like a maze with multiple random passages.

It was a fortress that didn't allow enemy penetration.

There were 30 hostages in the room, including Shin Se-ho and Kwon Joon-hyuk. Most of them were employees and girls working at the karaoke bar. Unfortunately, some students who used the convenience store on the first floor were also trembling among the adults.

One young man whispered to another.

“Did you hear? If Phantom doesn't show up, then he will kill the hostages one by one... Before that, we have to neutralize him somehow.

“That's right. Even if he has guns, aren't we more numerous? I think we can neutralize him if we strike at the same time but...”

“I think there will be good enough odds if 10 people join together.”

“I agree.”

“Me too.”

Big Brother hadn't tied up the hostages. He was just blocking the entrance so that no one could leave the room. The hostages were talking so low that Big Brother couldn't hear them. They would jump from four directions at the same time, suppressing the opponent and taking his guns. It was better to risk one's life fighting than to die one by one.

On the right, the man who decided to strike Big Brother was anxious. Among the hostages here, there were many men working as waiters, their numbers reaching more than 10 people. How confident was that person in his ability that he didn't even tie them up?

Still, they would just die at Big Brother's hand if time kept passing. If so, he would rather risk his life to fight. The determined man bit his lip. He nodded towards the other hostages.

Someone counted down in a low voice.

“3... 2... 1... Pounce!”

A dozen people instantly jumped towards Big Brother. They lowered their bodies as much as possible and focused on making it difficult for the opponent to hit them with his gun. Big Brother held the gun in one hand and slowly opened his eyes. He didn't seem confused at all by the hostages' actions.

Then he muttered,

“There are a lot of people so killing a few hostages should be okay.”

Big Brother rotated his body and kicked one of the hostages.

“Keok!”

He then turned and pulled the trigger at the men who were trying to do a back tackle.

Tang! Tatang!

“Kuheok!”

A man was shot in the leg and rolled across the floor. On his right, the man who tried to jump Big Brother was shot in the head.

Big Brother laughed,

“Did you wonder why I didn’t tie you up? The reason is simple. Even 100 of you lowlives wouldn’t be able to beat me.”

“Aaaaack!”

One waiter took a knife and attacked Big Brother from a blind

spot. The knife struck Big Brother's chest and the waiter shouted loudly,

“Hahaha! I did it. My attack...”

Big Brother casually looked back and fired his gun. It pierced the waiter's waist precisely.

The hostages started to feel despair.

“I'm sorry but your attacks won't work on me while I'm wearing this.”

Big Brother took off his suit and showed the trembling hostages. It was a reinforced suit. It was like he was wearing black armor.

“B-Body armour...!”

He wore a reinforced suit made of Kevlar. Special products made of those fibers were used in various bulletproof shirts. He wore it around his whole body. Even if it was hard to move, the ability to protect the body was enormous.

Furthermore, the rubbery black fibres on the outside were Nomex. It was a special fiber used for firefighting clothing, as it had great heat resistance and electrical insulation. In the end, he couldn't be hurt, even if he was attacked with a stun gun. The only downside was that it felt like an extra 20kg of weight was on the body. It was the same as wearing huge sandbags on the body.

“Being able to move like that while wearing this...”

He had handled 10 hostages in an instant.

“Ahh... Ahhhhh!”

The remaining people could only scream. Big Brother knocked on his suit and muttered,

“If you want to knock me down while wearing this, you should bring an anti-tank rocket.”

Kwon Joon-hyuk, who was hiding among the hostages, groaned. Then he spoke to the injured Shin Se-ho. Shin Se-ho had several bullets in his shoulders and thighs. Despite that, he didn't give Phantom's contact details.

Therefore, Big Brother took hostages and made an announcement to the police.

–If Phantom doesn't come here within 30 minutes then I will kill the hostages one by one.

This was the condition that Big Brother gave to the police.

“D-Department Head... Do you really not know Phantom's contact details?”

“Eu.... euhhh.... I said I don’t know...”

“You said you were friends!”

“.....”

Shin Se-ho had no words to say and could only bite his lips. Big Brother didn’t seem to believe him but what he said was real. The relationship with Phantom was only one way. Shin Se-ho couldn’t do anything unless he was contacted.

“Phantom...”

Shin Se-ho called out Phantom’s name in his pain-filled state. Would Phantom come here to save him and the hostages?

If he did, Phantom wasn’t just a criminal...

---

Tae-hyuk arrived at the scene to find the neighborhood completely sealed off by police and soldiers.

“No... I told him to release the hostages. Block it off completely to stop anyone from entering.”

The soldiers were the 35th Battalion of the Capital Defense

Command. He had encountered them during the Bomber case. They were a special unit specialization in street warfare and counterterrorism, but now they were just blocking off the road.

“First of all, I have to somehow enter.”

He could go up to the police.

-I am Phantom. From now on, I will plunge into enemy territory!

That wouldn't happen. It was impossible for an average person to get past that surveillance and enter, but it was possible for Tae-hyuk who had the crime skills.

‘Then let's use my newly acquired skill.’

First of all, he used Counterfeit to change his leather jacket into a soldier uniform. Then he use Disguise to get the face of Sergeant Kim Ha-sae who he met several times. The Demon Revealing Mirror showed that he had become a completely different person.

‘There is a bit of height difference. Was he originally taller due to his combat boots?’

Tae-hyuk approached a soldier who formed part of the blockade.

“The road is fully sealed off, and not even a single ant will be able to enter.”



Park Jong-sa, who was maintaining the barrier, looked at Tae-hyuk and said,

“Sergeant Kim. Didn’t I tell you to make a barrier on the roof? Why did you come down here?”

Tae-hyuk didn’t panic and said,

“The captain asked me to check the blockade.”

“Really?”

In this situation, it was good to borrow the name of the boss. It was even better if they were a very high ranking person that couldn’t be questioned.

Sergeant Park pointed inside with his thumb. It was a quick signal telling him to go inside.

“Then keep up the good work. Charge!”

Park Jong-sa clicked his tongue as he saw Tae-hyuk saluting.

“Aigoo, look at that salute. This is a real situation. He should go back to basic training.”

“.....”

Tae-hyuk had a moment of silence for Kim Ha-sae before moving to the back of the karaoke bar.

‘The killer is sent by the Triads.’

It was obviously that the opponent would possess a great deal of firepower that he couldn’t deal with. Tae-hyuk wouldn’t be able to fight him with the Violence skill and iron pipe.

‘But for weak people, there is a weak way of fighting.’

Five minutes later, Counterfeit was released and his leather jacket was restored. Tae-hyuk took the phantom mask from his pocket and placed it on his face.

Phantom and Big Brother.

The two criminals’ fight was about to start.

## Chapter 93 – Big Brother’s Raid #4

---

The police couldn’t work properly due to the numerous hostages being trapped. Furthermore, most captors only asked for money or a means of escape. However, the person in the building declared that he would kill all the hostages if Phantom wasn’t brought here.

“Damn...!”

After completing a call with the police commissioner, the commando leader spat out words of frustration. No matter how he thought about it, the opponent was from a terrorist organization with a grudge against Phantom.

About 30 minutes ago, a commando strike team was dispatched after hearing the news story that an armed villain was holding hostages in the middle of the city. The leader of the commandos thought that the other person was just a gangster with a gun, and that they would be able to easily overpower him.

Therefore, the 1st squadron consisting of 12 people entered the building. The commandos were a group that went through high intensity training. They were above ordinary soldiers in terms of combat skills, and all of them had exceptional skills. When it came to suppressing terrorism, they were confident that they wouldn’t fall behind the special forces of other countries.

However, the commandos leader soon realized that his judgement was wrong.

“I’m sorry Chief-nim. The opponent installed booby traps in the building and completely blocked all access routes. He has a M60 machine gun.”

The commandos leader felt dizzy at the report from his deputy.

“What about the damage to us?”

“Two people slightly wounded... Four people severely wounded... Fortunately, there were no casualties.”

“How can you say that?”

“....I’m really sorry.”

The number of enemies was at most three. However, 6 of the 12 people had come back with injuries?

“The nation’s largest counterterrorism force...”

The deputy started making excuses.

“It is a structure that is difficult to break into, due to the narrow passages inside. Furthermore, the opponent isn’t a mere terrorist. The machine gun was aimed precisely at areas where there was no protective clothing. Furthermore, there aren’t just machine guns, but rifles and shotguns...”

“Stop your excuses. Prepare a second team to strike. Why isn’t Detective Cho Kang-suk coming!”

There were only two people who could get in touch with Phantom. One of them was being held inside the building. Then somebody blocking the scene cried out loudly.

“Detective Cho Kang-suk has arrived!”

The commandos leader looked at the place where the voice was heard. The person he had been waiting for rushed in.

“I’m sorry. I am late.”

Detective Cho Kang-suk was accompanied by Investigator Joo Hyun-ho. He was a criminal profiler and came along for negotiations with the criminal.

Joo Hyun-ho asked the deputy.

“There isn’t much time left until the killer kills the first hostage?”

“Yes, that’s right. There is 10 minutes and 20 seconds left.”

“I understand. You should try to contact Phantom, and I will buy as much time as possible by trying to communicate with the criminal.”

The commandos leader nodded favourably at Joo Hyun-ho's words.

“So can you contact Phantom?”

“I am trying. He seems to be in a place with no radio waves.”

“Hu... I don't know why innocent civilians need to get involved in the power struggle between criminals. Anyway, Investigator Joo Hyun-ho should buy as much time as possible. There will soon be a second attempt to penetrate.”

Kang-suk's face turned pale.

“I heard that there are 30 hostages. If you try to break through with force, won't they be harmed?”

“It is a shame for me as well. However, we are bound by the rule to not negotiate with terrorists. There needs to be some sacrifices.”

Kang-suk's face distorted.

They should think of the people's lives as the top priority. However, the hostages were treated like obstacles in the way of catching a terrorist.

The commandos leader noticed Kang-suk's atmosphere and tried

to appease him.

“In the first place, I think that people who work in a place like the karaoke bars are wrong.”

It was counterproductive. In the end, Cho Kang-suk's anger exploded.

“The police isn't here to kill terrorists, but to protect the people!”

The face of the commandos leader turned red. Cho Kang-suk was obviously right. However, he would be broken if he was too upright. In order to live in this world, sometimes a moderate compromise was needed.

Cho Kang-suk realized that he had shouted at someone higher than him and bowed his head,

“....I'm sorry. I am a little agitated.”

“No. It is too cruel for a man like you to live in this world. Anyway, please try to reach Phantom as soon as possible.”

“I understand.”

Kang-suk wanted to go inside and save the hostages if he could, but he couldn't do that.

“No, ah! Why isn’t the call going throu...eh?”

“What? Did you contact Phantom?”

“It seems like it.”

Although it wasn’t a phone call, Phantom had sent him a text message. Joo Hyun-ho and the commandos leader gathered around Kang-suk.

“...The culprit is a killer sent by the Triads, and there is only one person.”

“Haha... A single person did all this?”

Kang-suk ignored the commandos leader and continued to read Phantom’s message.

“He has already killed 10 hostages. There is a danger that they will all be wiped out if you try to forcefully enter.”

“.....”

The gathered people groaned. If all the hostages were killed then it meant the hostage taker would die. So why did he kill the hostages so easily? They were appalled when they imagined what was going on inside the building.



“Breaching is forbidden. I am currently attempting contact. Oh, that is the end of the message.”

The face of the commandos leader turned red after hearing the message. It meant that if left to the commandos, the hostages would die so don't interfere. Then he suddenly realized something.

“Wait. That meant the Phantom is inside there now.”

“...It seems like it.”

“Damn. Does this makes sense? The blockade is so tight that not even a single ant can get in. How did he get in there?!”

The gathered people gulped and looked at the building where the hostages were being held. Inside was the terrorist and the hostages...

And Phantom.

---

Tae-hyuk turned off his smartphone and muttered,

“I'm sorry but I am listening to this conversation.”

He had wiretapped the police and grasped their movements perfectly. Originally, he needed expensive frequency detection

equipment, a solar panel that supported 24 hour power, and a remote control device in order to bug them.

However, Tae-hyuk had something better than a wiretapping device. Everybody carried their phones around with them everywhere. He installed a Chinese hacking tool that Moonlight Flower put in the smartphones of Cho Kang-suk, the commandos leader, and the police commissioner.

He could listen to their conversations in real time and see the contents of their phones. Of course, there were security programs, but they couldn't stop the hacking tools that cost tens of thousands of dollars.

Tae-hyuk licked his lips.

“The only downside is the short shelf-life... Should I use this opportunity to learn cracking?”

Anyway, sooner or later, he would have to visit China in order to deal with the Triads. It would be nice if he could meet their hackers and learn their skills.

Tae-hyuk analyzed the opponent by combining the information that the police had with his own. The conclusion that emerged was that he had absolutely no chance of winning in a frontal confrontation. Even if he had the crime skills, he would die if he was shot.

“Of course, I’m not an idiot to straight up fight a killer like in an action movie.”

Tae-hyuk picked a suitable room and entered. He looked at the things that were present.

“Laptop, camera, microphone, lights. Perfect.”

If he had this equipment, then Internet broadcasting could be done anywhere. Karaoke machines were installed in all rooms. They were LAN connected for song data updates. The karaoke machines could be operated from the main counter. It meant he could broadcast a live video into the room of the killer.

Tae-hyuk connected the LAN connected laptop to the control unit at the counter and muttered,

“I won’t be able to receive any balloons. Isn’t this Phantom’s Internet debut?”

---

Big Brother checked the time and spoke to the hostages.

“It is the promised execution time. Who should I kill?”

Then one of the hostages spoke in a quivering voice. It was the unfortunate schoolgirl who was caught at the convenience store with her younger sister, Min Soo-young.

“Y-You’ve already killed 10 people. Is that still not enough?”

“Moths flying into the fire isn’t an execution. Yes. I’ll kill you first.”

Min Soo-young’s face turned white.

“S-Spare me... I’ll do whatever you want.”

Then Big Brother laughed.

“Really? I think your little sister is here with you. I’ll let you live if you shoot her in the head. How about it?”

Soo-young’s sister , Soo-yeon, who was two years younger than her, called out in a quivering voice.

“U-Unni... I-I don’t want to die... Huh? U-Unni...”

The two people grabbed each other’s hands and stared into the other’s eyes. Even if it meant living, she couldn’t kill her sister. In the end, Soo-young spoke with determined eyes.

“I-I would rather die. Save my little sister.”

“Hoh... This warm love between sisters, I like it. Then I will save

your sister.”

“T-Thank you.”

“But I have one condition. The Yakuza cut their own belly to show their determination. Is it called harakiri? If you want to save your sister then shoot yourself with this. Then I will spare her.”

Big Brother pulled a gun from his waist and threw it towards Soo-young.

“.....”

Big Brother laughed happily like he was enjoying this.

Soo-young picked up the gun and stared at the demon in front of her. Could she use this to kill the opponent? That idea popped up but she shook her head. She had seen the demon fighting the hostages. There was no way she could kill him with this small handgun.

“If you make a fuss then I will blow a hole in your sister’s head, so be sure to shoot at your belly button.”

“.....”

Soo-young’s body shook like it was cold. After cram school was over, she was thirsty and went to buy some milk with her sister...

How did she end up in this situation? Everything seemed unreal. If she closed her eyes then she might be able to return to reality.

“Sob... It isn’t a dream...”

In action movies, the protagonist could survive being shot with several bullets. Could she live like that? With such hope, Soo-young aimed the muzzle of the gun at her stomach with trembling hands.

However, reality wasn’t that easy. Once the 5.56mm bullet was fired, a hole the size of a finger would be made where the bullet entered. It would be okay with just that. However, the bullet fired from the pistol would rotate and damage the internal organs. It also wasn’t uncommon for there to be an exit hole.

This was a tool designed to kill people in the first place. Being shot in the belly would mean unconditional death.

“P-Please...”

Please survive...

With that hope, Soo-young pulled the trigger. No, she was about to pull it.

–It seems like something interesting is happening.

The moment a man's voice was heard out of nowhere, Soo-young stopped her finger that was about to pull the trigger. Big Brother and the hostages looked in the direction of the voice. A man in a phantom mask had appeared on the karaoke machine in the corner of the room.

“The machine was hacked.”

–All the systems in this place are in my hands. You should surrender, rather than try to resist.

Big Brother smiled and walked over to the monitor.

“Haha! It seems like you can hear my voice. You must have installed a bug somewhere. So what can you do? Huh? Are you going to pop out of the monitor like in a horror movie?”

–I'll show you proof that I am controlling all the systems.

At that moment, the electricity in the room turned off. The hostages shrieked as it suddenly became dark.

Big Brother had several more pistols besides what he gave to Soo-young. He fired towards the door.

Tang!

“H-Hik!”

“Trying to take advantage of the uproar to flee. Yes. Try to do it again a second time. Huhuhu.”

The man who tried to secretly open the door and run away stumbled back into the darkness of the room. Less than 10 seconds later, the lights in the room turned on again. The monitor also turned back on.

-How is it? This is what I am capable of.

“Ridiculous. Don’t think you can deal with me by limiting my vision. The darkness won’t be able to stop me.”

Even in the darkness, Big Brother had accurately aimed at the hostage trying to escape.

-I have a prophecy. You will die here today.

“Bullshit!”

Big Brother was provoked and fired a few bullets towards the monitor.

Smoke emerged and several pieces flew away.



“Listen carefully. Stop talking bullshit and appear in front of me right now, or I will kill one hostage every minute. Well, if other people die, then your ratings will fall to the bottom. It means I don’t have to look at you anymore.”

Big Brother’s words were only half right. Tae-hyuk was obviously listening to his words, but it wasn’t through a bug.

‘By the way, he ruined the monitor after a little provocation. If I knew this earlier, then I would’ve only recorded three minutes.’

Tae-hyuk smiled bitterly from where he was hiding among the hostages.

‘Anyway, the killer’s brain is equivalent to Park Sung-kwang.’

Big Brother thought he was having a real-time conversation with Phantom, but he was wrong. Tae-hyuk had just played a pre-recorded video on the karaoke machine. He entered the room when the electricity went out. Now there were two hostages in the room with the same face. However, Big Brother was agitated and failed to notice it. Tae-hyuk had disguised himself as Kwon Joon-hyuk and hid inside.

Big Brother thought there were only helpless hostages here. He was shouting at an illusion of Phantom without knowing that an assassin had come in to kill him.

## Chapter 94 – Big Brother's Raid #5

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The encounter with a killer who possessed overwhelming violence evolved Tae-hyuk's crime skill.

[A new attribute has been added to Crime Skill: Violence.]

['Damage to Both Sides' has been acquired.]

[An attack on your opponent will also damage you.]

Tae-hyuk inwardly groaned as he looked at the message on the Demon Revealing Mirror.

‘Hrmm... Something....’

Unlike the other attributes he had gained so far, the performance was quite ambiguous. The good news was that it was possible to turn it on and off.

‘Eh? Wait a minute. Can I designate the opponent?’

Tae-hyuk's eyes gleamed as he discovered an additional explanation at the bottom. Then the story was different. If Damage to Both Sides was used, doing damage to one person would inflict it on the other. The scale was exactly 5:5. It was an attribute that

would increase the use of the Violence skill if used well.

‘But in order to damage the other person, the conditions have to be satisfied?’

Tae-hyuk manipulated the Demon Revealing Mirror to check what the conditions were, and then licked his lips.

‘Cancel what I said about this being useful... What, these conditions are crazy.’

While Tae-hyuk was looking at the new attribute, Big Brother had completely broken the mirror. Phantom’s provocation seemed better than he thought. Then Big Brother started to unleash his anger on the hostages.

“Kid. I said that I would spare you sister if you shot yourself in the belly? That is cancelled. If you want to complain, blame Phantom.”

Big Brother’s eyes were full of madness. It wouldn’t be strange if he killed all the hostages right now. Min Soo-young wept and clung to his leg.

“...P-Please, s-spare... I-I will die. R-Right now...”

Then she pulled up her clothes and revealed her belly. Big Brother looked at her in surprise. It seemed like she really would kill herself. It was a very interesting situation for him since the

sacrifice was nothing but hypocrisy. He would have been able to play more if it wasn't for Phantom.

Big Brother kicked Min Soo-young's belly like it was annoying. Her body curved like a bow and a sharp scream emerged, but this wasn't the end. Big Brother grabbed her head and slammed it against the floor. There was a cracking sound and blood rushed out from Min Soo-young's nose.

“Keeok, augh... Keook...”

“Yes. I've just come up with a good idea. I will give you the pleasure of killing your sister directly.

Min Soo-young tried to somehow save her sister. Therefore, she didn't release the gun in her hand even when she was kicked and her face slammed against the ground. Big Brother grabbed Min Soo-young's shoulder firmly so that she couldn't resist. The other hand grabbed her right arm that was holding the pistol. Then he slowly turned the muzzle towards her little sister.

“Ah... No, do...”

Min Soo-young tried desperately to resist but her body didn't budge.

“U-Unni...”

In the end, the muzzle arrived directly in front of Min Soo-yeon.

If she pulled the trigger, then her sister's life would be taken.

“Uwah... Euh...!”

Min Soo-young finally gave up resisting and closed her eyes. She didn't want to see her sister dying in front of her.

“Aigoo. You shouldn't miss something this good.”

But Big Brother was persistent to the end. He forced open Min Soo-young's eyes so that the sight in front of her would be imprinted.

“Now. Pull this and there will be a very impressive scene. Don't worry. You will soon follow your little sister.”

Big Brother put his finger on the trigger and pulled.

Tatang!

The bullet fired from the muzzle struck the wall above Soo-yeon's head. What, did she avoid the attack just now?

Big Brother glared at the man who had pushed Soo-yeon out of the way. He was the only one who knew what that person did. He mixed in with the hostages and popped out like lightning when the trigger was pulled and kicked Min Soo-yeon's legs, making her fall to the ground. As a result, she was bleeding from the nose like her

sister, but she was able to avoid being shot.

Big Brother looked at the man with a strange expression.

“What, this guy?”

If the other person's response was too early, then Big Brother would've seen it and changed the direction of the muzzle. If he was too late, then the girl's head would literally be like a cracked watermelon. It was impossible for a human to react that fast when a bullet was shot.

“Hrmm... How did you notice the moment of attack?”

Min Soo-young's gun was loaded with 5.56mm bullets that had a speed of 945 meters per second. It was a tremendous speed that was three times the speed of sound. It was normal for the head to already burst the moment the firing sound was heard.

That meant the other person knew exactly when he was shooting. But was that possible? Big Brother looked at the opponent like he had seen a magic trick.

“You are the one who was with Shin Se-ho.”

He was the one who urinated himself after being threatened with a few bullets. Therefore, it must just be a coincidence.

“It is funny. Very funny! Kuhaha! You made me feel very amused!”

He was lucky with the first bullet, but Big Brother still had many bullets remaining. Even if he shot everyone here 10 times, he would still have some left. Big Brother laughed crazily and aimed the muzzle again at Min Soo-yeon who was rolling on the ground.

“Let’s see if you can avoid it again this time. Of course, such a coincidence won’t be repeated twice.”

He had protected his body with a specially made reinforced suit. In such a situation, murdering other people gave him a pleasure which couldn’t be explained by words.

“But what are you going to do after killing everyone here?”

“What?”

Big Brother thought he heard wrong for a moment. That crazy bastard was making strange noises as he was staring straight into Big Brother’s eyes.

“There are many police officers outside who are trying to save the hostages. If the hostages are alive then there is a possibility of escape. But that will change if they are all dead. So how are you doing to run away?”

“Huhuhu... A rat is worried about a cat. If you have questions,

then I'll let you know in the afterlife. At the very least, you should know why you died. I came here to catch the Phantom. Well, do you already know that much? Whether successful or not, a helicopter is going to pick me up."

"That is great, but what should I do? I blew up your rescue helicopter."

"What?"

"The pilot's name is Wei Chang."

"This bastard... How do you know that?"

The bastard put his hand into his clothes and pulled out something white.

"Phantom mask? D-Don't tell me...!"

"Do I still look like your hostage?"

The confused Big Brother slowly counted the number of hostages. There were 30 people, and he killed 11 rebellious ones, so 19 people should be remaining. But no matter how much he counted, the number remained the same.

"2-20?"



“I told you. I came here to kill you.”

The bastard who put on the mask was Phantom.

---

“Kuhahahaha! You walked in here of your own volition.”

Big Brother picked up the submachine gun that he had left in the corner. It was the German-made MP5 that boasted high precision and reliability. It was used in numerous special forces and counter-terrorist units since the 1970s. Most of them were retired and disappeared into history, but they were still active in the mafia.

The incredible capacity to fire 800 shots per minute meant that it couldn't even be compared to a pistol. There were 30 bullets in 6 cartridges, too much just to kill one person. The whole body would turn into a bloody mess.

Tae-hyuk told the hostages to gather in one corner of the room.

“If you don't want to be killed by blind bullets then you should all fall to the ground.”

“Uack, aaaaack!”

The hostages screamed and fell to the ground.

“It seems like you are planning something interesting, but let’s see if you can survive the first hail of bullets.”

[Violence has been used.]

-An iron pipe is equipped.

Big Brother pulled the trigger of the MP5.

Dududududu!

In an instant, 30 bullets fired towards Tae-hyuk as the magazine became completely empty.

[Sixth Sense has been used.]

‘I see the attacks!’

Sixth Sense allowed Tae-hyuk to feel where the attacks were coming from. The trajectory of the bullets became a red line in the air.

“What? B-Blood?”

Big Brother stared at Tae-hyuk.

Violence allowed him to increase his strength and agility by a certain extent. The higher his stats, the greater the increase. Tae-hyuk currently had 50 agility. Since it was amplified, it was possible for him to move beyond human limits.

However, the power of the submachine gun was also enormous. Even with the help of Violence, he couldn't avoid all bullets. Tae-hyuk's shoulders and thighs were soaked with blood.

"You are confidently barging in. However, you should realize that you can't hurt me just by avoiding those bullets."

Big Brother said,

He used all the abilities of Violence, but it was just to avoid the opponent's attacks. The first one to succumb in the end would be Tae-hyuk. However, Tae-hyuk was still smiling with a relaxed face.

"Checkmate."

"What?"

In no time, Tae-hyuk had reached close enough to stretch out and touch Big Brother's body.

"Hahat! I don't know what construction site you picked up that

pipe at. However, you won't be able to hurt me with it."

Big Brother wore a reinforced suit that even blocked bullets.

"But I can touch you at this distance."

Tae-hyuk struck Big Brother's shoulder like he was a quarterback.

"Kuahaha! You approached me to do this. It is an attack like a mosquito!"

"Now the armour protecting you has disappeared."

Tae-hyuk said and Hyung-nim looked down at his body,

"N-No?!"

The reinforced suit he had been wearing had disappeared. Tae-hyuk threw Big Brother's reinforced suit, that he had taken with Robbery, into the corner.

"Now let's try this."

Then he struck Big Brother with the iron pipe. It was a blow with enough power to shatter asphalt at once.

“I don’t know what you did to take off my reinforced suit, but I wouldn’t be a killer of the Triads if I relied on body armour.”

His strike didn’t work. Big Brother grabbed the iron pipe with his right arm and lifted it.

“It looks like this time it is my checkmate.”

“Keuk...”

Tae-hyuk groaned. Big Brother smiled with satisfaction. Instead of the submachine gun, he pulled out a familiar handgun and pointed it at Tae-hyuk’s head.

“Now, say your last words.”

If he pulled the trigger now, the opponent’s head will smash along with the phantom mask. Tae-hyuk spoke in a calm voice, even with the muzzle touching his head.

“Is there someone you are willing to risk your life to save?”

“What are you saying? Did you finally going crazy? Either way, it doesn’t matter. I don’t have such a person. The most important thing in this world is my own life.”

“Then now it is time to feel the pain that the people who died by your hands felt.”

“Is that the end? Well, goodbye Phantom.”

Big Brother pulled the trigger.

Tang!

The phantom mask was destroyed.

# Chapter 95 – Big Brother's Raid #6

---

“Kuaaaaak!”

Big Brother grabbed his head and shouted. As if a bullet had passed by his face, blood started to emerge.

“Kuheok...keeeok!”

A rough groan couldn't help emerging. He felt like falling onto the ground. However, Big Brother held on with superhuman patience. Even though it hurt, it wasn't fatal. Furthermore, the opponent also suffered an injury. When comparing his weapons and his basic stamina, the odds were still overwhelmingly in his favor.

But how on earth did he get hurt? Big Brother couldn't understand it.

Of course, the opponent wasn't safe either. Blood was dripping down between the cracked mask.

“T-This bastard...”

However, Phantom was sending him a crazy smile. It was like this situation was satisfactory, even though he was seriously injured.

‘The killer was unable to kill me. But... It really hurts!’

He pretended that he was fine, but he was actually covered in cold sweat. Originally, he should’ve been dead. Even though it was reduced by half, it wouldn’t be unusual if he was stunned.

He had to fulfill several conditions for Damage to Both Sides to be used. First, he had to touch the opponent for a certain amount of time, and exchange questions and answers. The range of Damage to Both Sides was determined by the content.

If he was told that there was someone the opponent wanted to protect, the opponent would become linked to that person. Then their wounds would be shared. On the other hand, if he answered that only himself was important, then a different effect would occur.

Tae-hyuk smirked.

“This is the problem with bad guys. They talk too much.”

If the opponent had fired the gun before Damage to Both Sides was triggered, then it would’ve been over. In order to prevent such a situation, Tae-hyuk made Big Brother think that his plan was to take off the reinforced suit. That alone reduced his defensive capability, but it allowed Big Brother to move much faster. Then he deliberately allowed himself to be caught.

‘Looking at what he did with the hostages, this killer is the type



to play with his opponents. It is easy to buy time if I create a suitable atmosphere.'

Thus, Damage to Both Sides was completely triggered. Tae-hyuk pointed a finger at his chest and said,

"Now you can't kill me. Fire one more shot if you are curious."

"Kuock, do you think I won't do it?"

Big Brother aimed at Tae-hyuk's body and pulled the trigger. However, his target was the shoulder, not the heart. The gunshot rang out and blood simultaneously appeared on both Tae-hyuk and Big Brother.

"Kuhak!"

"The one shooting is the one who is suffering."

"H-How? Did it do nothing? Wasn't it a clear shot?"

"Only you are hurt, you clown."

Tae-hyuk's taunt stunned Big Brother. He attacked the opponent only to get wounded himself. In addition, it seemed like he was the only one feeling pain. It was the first time Big Brother felt fear since he was born.

‘Thank god for the medicine.’

The two people suffered the same damage due to Damage to Both Sides. The reason why Big Brother’s suffering was overwhelming was simple. While hiding among the hostages, Tae-hyuk had injected medicine into his body to reduce the pain in advance. It was an anesthetic that he got from T Medical Centre.

Thanks to it, Tae-hyuk was able to bluff like he didn’t get hurt at all. It worked very well.

“Kuook!”

Big Brother was in a panicked state. No matter how he attacked the opponent, he would only get hurt himself. He didn’t know what witchcraft was used, but he couldn’t attack.

In fact, Tae-hyuk was the same. It was literally Damage to Both Sides. If he attacked Big Brother now, then the damage would return to Tae-hyuk.

‘But he doesn’t know that. Then my bluff will work!’

Tae-hyuk looked at Big Brother with mocking eyes. He was an elite killer with the best skills. When had he ever received such humiliating treatment? In the end, all of Big Brother’s patience disappeared.

Big Brother glared at Tae-hyuk.

“Still, I’m glad. I was able to protect my precious people.”

“Precious people?”

Tae-hyuk turned and looked at Min Soo-young and Min Soo-yeon, who were shaking in place. Then he muttered in a soft tone,

“I came to save these children. It is impossible to allow a killer to murder them.”

The two sisters looked at Phantom with wide eyes. The whole reason Phantom was here was in order to save them? It was so surprising that they couldn’t say anything.

Big Brother looked between Phantom, Min Soo-young, and Min Soo-yeon. He then started laughing like crazy. He didn’t know what magic Phantom was using to protect his body. Still, the reason he came here was to protect those children.

“Kuahahahaha! A criminal trying to save someone is funny. Then, let’s see if you can save them.”

Big Brother laughed and pointed his gun at the two sisters. He no longer hesitated. First, one foot forward. There was a tang and blood emerged from Min Soo-young’s head. And another foot. Blood covered Min Soo-yeon’s chest as she held her sister’s hand.

The two people, who the Phantom was trying to protect, were killed at the same time.

How about this? His purpose... P...

“K-Kuheok... T-this... Keook!”

At the same time, blood spurted from Big Brother’s head and chest. Then the floor approached Big Brother’s head. No, to be exact, Big Brother’s body was collapsing towards the ground.

At the last moment, Big Brother realized it. Phantom didn’t use strange magic. He was the strange thing himself. And he probably created...

Flop.

Big Brother killed two people at the same time. The effects of Damage to Both Sides triggered, causing him to die. Tae-hyuk clicked his tongue as he looked at Big Brother’s corpse on the ground.

“You. Your skills were too good. If you didn’t kill them both at the same time, then you would’ve lived.”

Phantom killed the killer. The hostages realized this and cheered.

“W-We’re saved!”

“Waaaah!”

The people started crying as they realized that they had survived. One hostage went up to the fallen children.

“You bad person... You killed these children...”

Tae-hyuk quietly reached out and touched his fingers to their necks. It was marginal, but there was still a pulse.

“They are still alive. However, it would be better to call a doctor as soon as possible. Go outside and tell the police there there are two severely wounded people.”

“M-Me?”

“Yes.”

“U-Understood.”

The hostage nodded after receiving the instructions and ran out of the room. Tae-hyuk looked at the two sisters who were unconscious.

“Don’t resent me too much for giving you half of the pain. This was for the best.”

At the same time, he felt the pain that had been suppressed by the anesthetic. A crying hostage bowed to Phantom.

“T-Thank you for saving us.”

Then like dominos, the other hostages also gave thanks.

“Phantom-nim. Thank you very much.”

Tae-hyuk took a deep breath and told the hostages.

“Let’s get out of here. The killer seems to have set up bombs. Take these children as well. They are seriously injured, so be careful not to shock them.”

“Leave it to us!”

The spirited hostages left the room one by one. A few people remained and gently lifted the stunned children.

Once all of them left the room, Tae-hyuk was suddenly alone.

First of all, he couldn’t forget about Big Brother’s weapons. They were things that weren’t readily available in South Korea. Just taking the guns would be the reward for today’s work.

Tae-hyuk looked at Big Brother's corpse and muttered.

“It is literally Damage to Both Sides.”

---

Tae-hyuk, who was disguised as Kwon Joon-hyuk, mingled with the people in order to leave the building. The hostages were so relieved that they survived that they didn't even notice that their numbers had increased.

The police shouted with joy as the people came out.

“The hostages are coming!”

“Maybe the culprit is dead!”

Then the special units tried to enter the building.

“There are bombs installed in the building! Call the experts to dismantle the bombs!”

“Enter with care!”

“Phantom is in there! Somehow catch him!”

The men gulped. Phantom killed an opponent with a huge

firepower that couldn't be matched. Now they might have to fight him.

The people who survived Big Brother swarmed everywhere.

“A-Any wounded, please come over here!”

Several ambulances were carrying injured people from the scene.

“Sir, over here!”

A nurse shouted as she saw Tae-hyuk, who was bleeding from the head. As it happened, the ambulances belonged to the hospital where An Eun-young's father was the director.

Tae-hyuk sighed.

He had suffered a gunshot wound to his head and shoulder. He had somehow hung on due to the power of the anesthetic but he was at his limit. He would be able to get treated by pretending to be a hostage, but he wanted to avoid even a 1% chance of detection.

It would be better to ask for help from Moonlight Flower. She would introduce him to an unlicensed doctor who worked in the back alleys.

The nurse held out her hand to grab his bag.



“Give me the bag.”

However, he couldn't give it to her since the bag contained guns. The weight was 80kg so he couldn't hand it over to others.

“It is okay.”

“T-That... The blood from your head...”

Tae-hyuk replied with a smile.

“I'm still half alive.”

---

-Breaking news. The terrorist incident in the middle of the city has ended with the death of the perpetrator. It is believed that the terrorist was killed by the criminal Phantom, who wears the opera mask. The prosecutors have given an explanation that should be accurate. At the crime scene...

The young boss of Huaqing, Li Zheng, one of the 13 branches of the Triad, watched the broadcast on TV.

“In the end, Big Brother failed...”

The boss' attitude wasn't angry but his subordinate still flinched. He was nervous about being shot as he carefully asked Li Zheng.

“Should we send another killer?”

“No. If Big Brother failed then it means he is an opponent that can't be dealt with individually.”

“Then how...?”

Li Zheng quietly rose from his seat.

“The Triads has gained tremendous profit from South Korea. Sooner or later, the Red Mafia and Yakuza will fight for it. In such a situation, we can't fight Phantom.”

They vowed revenge but the situation wasn't good. If they mobilized many people to deal with Phantom then the other groups wouldn't miss it.

“Then what...”

“If we can't kill him then we need to make him join our side.”

“Then I will arrange a flight for South Korea.”

“Not yet. Let's first watch the situation. Use all of Huaqing's power to watch the Phantom's movements. Then either the Red Mafia or Yakuza will try to catch him.”

The subordinate's eyes shone.

Phantom would clearly become the center of the mafia war. If so, they would first look at the reactions of other organizations without intervening.

Phantom was burning with hostility towards the Triads. Li Zheng planned to use the other organizations to hook him. Li Zheng quietly watched the video on the monitor.

“The Phantom will end up eating South Korea.”

“Yes, Boss.”

Phantom...

He wanted to have him.

---

Big Brother, the best killer in Huaqing was dead! The news spread to all the crime syndicates in the world.

“According to the eyewitnesses, he fought Big Brother and won.”

“Wasn't he playing with Big Brother?”

“He shot Phantom, but the attacker was the one that got injured!”

“Oh my god! Is he even human?”

“He can change his face freely?”

“Is it true that the Red Mafia lost billions of dollars in forgeries due to Phantom?”

“Who the hell is he?!”

“I don’t know! However, we have to get the Phantom!”

“Can’t we hire him?”

“Prepare a private plane! I am going to South Korea right now!”

Criminals around the world started to notice a small country in the east of Asia. There was only one thing they wanted: to find out Phantom’s identity.

# Chapter 96 – Advance Notice Of A Storm #1

---

As a result of the fight against the terrorist, Phantom was being broadcasted on TV every day.

Among them, the interviews with the survivors of the terrorist attacks garnered a lot of interest. On the screen, a woman who was suffering relatively minor injuries was explaining the situation at that time.

“Some of the men tried to lunge at the terrorist. They thought that despite the fact that he had a gun, he was still a human, and could be beaten. When they failed, I really thought that I would die.”

A reporter holding a microphone asked from next to her.

“Then he appeared?”

“Yes. He emerged from a place that the terrorist never expected.”

The reporter knew the outline of the case, but shivered and pretended ignorance.

“Did he break through the ceiling?”

“Nope. He was mixed in among the hostages. The person that the culprit thought was ordinary suddenly pulled out a phantom mask

and put it on his face.”

“Ohu... Then did you see the Phantom’s face?”

“Yes. But I don’t think it is his original face.”

“What do you mean?”

The woman hesitated for a moment before replying.

“That...there was a man who was groaning next to me, and Phantom had the same face as him. They obviously aren’t twins... Maybe Phantom has the ability to disguise himself with another’s face.”

“Perhaps it is special makeup or something like that.”

“I don’t know. Then he suddenly pulled an iron pipe from somewhere and started fighting the terrorist.”

“He fought that monster with an iron pipe?”

“Yes.”

“It is certainly a famous weapon, but using it to fight a terrorist armed with powerful weapons... It sounds a little reckless.”

“I thought so as well. No matter how great Phantom is, I thought that he couldn’t beat a gun with an iron pipe. Then an amazing thing happened. The terrorist shot Phantom’s face... Blood appeared on the face of the shooter.”

Changing his face could be explained with special makeup. However, not only did he survive a gunshot, but he also wounded the opponent? It was a mystery that was impossible to prove with modern science.

The reporter finished the interview with some last words.

“Thank you for the good words in the midst of the confusion. Then, let’s connect to a correspondent who will take you inside the building where the incident took place. Now, shall we see how the Phantom fought the terrorist? Come out!”

The screen faded out before changing scenes. Shin Se-ho turned off the TV from where he was lying down on the ICU bed.

“Damn. Phantom came to my rescue, but I couldn’t interview him properly... I’m not qualified as a journalist.”

Kwon Joon-hyuk, who was lying on the next bed, raised his body half-way up.

“It seems so. It would’ve been a much more plausible scene if you were there.”

“At any rate, didn’t Phantom know my heart? He risked his life in order to protect me.”

Ha? Really?

Kwon Joon-hyuk barely refrained from saying the words.

“Ugh... There is no time for this. Ask the doctor when I can be discharged. If I can just get an exclusive interview then the ratings...”

He hadn’t changed despite almost dying. He was still Shin Se-ho.

Kwon Joon-hyuk sighed and quietly muttered,

“Aigoo... It is the same as you smearing dung on the wall. Can you really catch that guy?”

Unfortunately for Shin Se-ho, he wouldn’t get the desired interview with Phantom for some time.

---

“When I think about it again, this skill is too crazy.”

Tae-hyuk was lying on a bed and looking at the Demon Revealing Mirror. He wasn’t aware due to the anesthetic, but he had suffered serious injuries. Even if the damage was decreased by half, he was



still shot at close range. His shoulder bones were broken and the muscles had ruptured.

The problem was his head. After an X-ray, the doctor said that it was amazing that he was still alive. Tae-hyuk recalled the situation at that time and shivered.

“I was definitely shot in the head... If it wasn’t for the skill then I would be riding the express train to hell.”

The doctor said that his skull was cracked and the optic nerve shocked. For the time being, more medical treatment was needed. Just lying still would cause him to feel dizzy and nauseous. When he closed his eyes, he would see something like flashing lights. For a while, it felt like he was treated as a dead rat.

The hospital where Tae-hyuk was resting in didn’t have any signs. It was a place for criminals who couldn’t go to a proper hospital, or those who needed illegal treatments. The facility was unexpectedly very neat. Despite the lack of signs, it was better than a general neighborhood hospital.

“Seo Tae-hyuk. It is time for your regular checkup.”

The door opened and a man with thick horned glasses entered. He was Tae-hyuk’s primary doctor, Jung Eui-do.

“Is there any particular place where you are feeling pain?”

A nurse with a brusque expression untied the bandage wrapped around Tae-hyuk's head. Then Jung Eui-do asked with shining eyes.

“You said that you rolled down the stairs right? You weren't shot with a gun?”

Tae-hyuk replied with a smile.

“I really did roll down the stairs. I thought you didn't ask that type of thing here.”

“Aigoo... I'm sorry. I have been working here as a doctor for a long time, but I can't help my curiosity.”

“What do you normally do?”

“Ah, I am a specialist in abortions.”

“Cough...”

It was surprisingly easy to find unlicensed doctors in South Korea. Most of them did simple cosmetic surgery or abortions. In South Korea, having an abortion was an illegal procedure, so a back alley doctor was required for it.

‘The reason why the facility is so well-equipped...’

Jung Eui-do was a really chatty doctor, which was why Tae-hyuk didn't need to ask anything.

“It is okay until 10 weeks. The fetus starts to swell as arms and legs start forming, and after 25 weeks, it almost feels like I am killing a person instead of doing an abortion. Ah right, our hospital will do abortions up to 36 weeks. If you know anyone who needs one then please contact me.”

Jung Eui-do smiled and pulled out a business card. Tae-hyuk accepted it with a laugh.

‘36 weeks is almost murder.’

Maybe this doctor had killed more people than the murderer he fought a week ago. Since the medical treatment would take some time, Jung Eui-do continued to talk.

“When I'm here at night, I think I hear the sound of babies crying. Don't you think that is strange?”

“.....”

Tae-hyuk ignored Jung Eui-do and looked at the Demon Revealing Mirror. However, the contents of the story couldn't be ignored.

“In fact, it has been 100 years since the building where this hospital is was built. It used to be the headquarters of the Japanese

army. In the basement, prisoners were tortured and killed every day.

“...The Japanese?”

“Yes. After Korean became independent, they rushed away in a hurry, leaving something great hidden here.”

It might be dismissed as a ghost story told about an old building, but Tae-hyuk had heard this somewhere. It was clearly a memory from the future...

So maybe he might find a clue in Jung Eui-do's story.

Tae-hyuk put the Demon Revealing Mirror away and focused on the doctor's words.

“What is hidden?”

“That's what I mean. The Japanese gathered gold in South Korea and turned them into gold bullions. Then they buried them somewhere... This place...”

Surely the gold wasn't here? Tae-hyuk swallowed his saliva. When considering the Japanese army, that gold would be worth tens of billions of won.

“Gold...!”

“Ohh!”

“...I guessed there were clues leading to the hidden location, so I hired people and searched all over the place. But it looks like I was duped by the person who sold me the building. Ahahahat!”

“Well, it is a common ghost story. At any rate, it was interesting.”

“Is that so?”

Jung Eui-do finished the examination of Tae-hyuk and explained the results with a smile.

“Did you eat any wild ginseng? The bones are already almost restored. I think you can be discharged in two weeks.”

“I am better than wild ginseng. I can’t die that easily.”

“At any rate, you have a great resilience.”

It was really fortunate. Jung Eui-do made a few more jokes before leaving the room.

Tae-hyuk was left alone to think quietly with a very serious expression. It would be nice if it was a story that could be ignored. The Japanese fleeing without their treasure. They left clues behind

to where it was buried.

“The old Japanese army... Wasn’t there something like this?”

Seo Tae-hyuk had memories of the future. There were definitely something about the Japanese army in it.

“Was it two years later?”

Some gold that the Japanese army hid was found, causing the whole country to become noisy for a while. The full amount was returned to the nation’s treasury, with the finder only being given 50 million won.

“I forgot the spot where it was discovered...”

If Jung Eui-do’s story was true... Maybe Tae-hyuk could find something enormous.

“Wasn’t the original finder only given a pittance? But if I were the one to find it...”

He could swallow it up alone without the government noticing! He never imagined that his future memories would help in this way.

“I am going to be here for a while anyway... Should I start searching for a treasure map?”

The gold was said to be discovered by chance when the building was renovated. If so, the clue was hidden in a place with no light.

“A treasure map that no one else has found. Isn’t this amazing?”

Tae-hyuk’s eyes lit up.

Anyway, there would be no damages. Jung Eui-do said he searched this area but couldn’t find it. He was obviously quite disappointed. It was probably why he told his patients the story.

However, Tae-hyuk had the crime skills.

“In this case, I can use the Spying skill.”

Every day was so idle that hospital life seemed very enjoyable.

---

Kang-suk gathered at Kim Do-shik’s call. He wondered if Kim Do-shik wanted him to contact Phantom again.

“Aigoo. Now I dream of a phantom mask every night... Isn’t this terrible?”

Since the fight against the terrorist, the pressure from above to catch Phantom had increased, but they were unable to do so.

“Ah, Detective Cho.”

“I’m sorry but there has been no contact from Phantom...”

“It seems like you’re going to have a nervous breakdown. I’m sorry but this time it isn’t because of Phantom. A letter came for you.”

“A letter?”

Kang-suk was baffled. He wasn’t part of the general affairs section, so why would someone send a letter to him?

“That’s right. Park Sung-yul sent it.

“...Park Sung-yul.”

Kang-suk groaned.

The first heinous criminal that he caught. He was sentenced to 15 years in prison for brutally murdering a woman in her 40s.

“Read it first. If the contents are true... You are the one who is most familiar with Park Sung-yul. I wanted to hear your opinion.”

“Is it a case?”



“Just read it.”

“I understand.”

Kang-suk gulped. He slowly opened it and read Park Sung-yul's letter.

“O-Oh my god...”

The letter contained words that Kang-suk could never imagine.

## Chapter 97 – Advance Notice Of A Storm #2

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–Detective Cho Kang-suk, congratulations on your promotion. Detective-nim thought I only killed one person, but you were wrong. I killed a total of 14 people.

The letter continued but Kang-suk coughed and asked Kim Do-shik,

“T-This, is it real?”

“That’s why I called you. Continue reading.”

“Yes.”

This time, Kang-suk read Park Sung-yul’s letter to the end.

–I know what you are thinking. Is he crazy? But I am very normal. In fact, it was an accident that I was caught. Detective Cho Kang-suk should admit it as well. It was like someone stepped on a domino that I had lined up in a row. But now I can confidently announce my puzzle to the world, and I think that Detective Cho Kang-suk should have the honor of being the first person I show it to. Detective-nim, do you think there can be a perfect crime in this world?

The letter ended there. Kang-suk felt like Park Sung-yul had sent him a challenge gauntlet.

“...There is one more page.”

Behind the letter was a picture that seemed like an elementary school student painted it. Kang-suk couldn't understand it.

“Are Park Sung-yul's words true?”

“I don't know yet, but if it is true, it will be the worst hidden crime in our history.”

A Hidden crime was when a crime occurred but wasn't included in the official statistics, due to the investigating agency not recognizing it. Kang-suk looked at the picture drawn with crayons. It looked like a landscape somewhere, but it was impossible for him to interpret it.

“This is the same as a map.”

“I thought so as well. I don't know why Park Sung-yul, who has been in prison for three years, is sending such a thing now.”

“Maybe he thought that the way he was caught was unfair.”

“Wasn't it due to a drunk driving crackdown?”

Kang-suk nodded and thought back to when he caught Park Sung-yul three years ago.

On that day, Kang-suk went out to support some drunk driving crackdowns. There were always skirmishes with drunk drivers. As a large-sized Homicide detective, just standing there would make people control their anger.

“At the time, Park Sung-yul was driving a mid sized sedan. He submitted to the breathalyzer without saying anything. I couldn’t find any traces of drinking, but he even abstained from smoking in front of the police. I accidentally saw his eyes, and it was like looking at a frozen lake. I didn’t feel any emotions from him. I couldn’t help but feel like he was a bad guy...”

Kang-suk remembered the situation at that time. It really was an accident that he caught Park Sung-yul, now that he thought about it.

“There was obviously only Park Sung-yul in the car. However, the rear tires were similar to the front, meaning that there was something heavy in the trunk. It was something that weighed around the same as a human being.”

Kim Do-shik coughed.

“It might be an accident, but it is only a slight difference. Finding it like that... You really are a detective. At any rate, continue.”

“Then for the first time, Park Sung-yul showed some emotion. After seeing it, I was sure that he was hiding something. Originally, it was impossible to search the interior just for a DUI, so I used a little coercion to open the door of the trunk and looked

inside. There...”

“I know from there. There was a body inside a black plastic bag.”

“Yes.”

Park Sung-yul was arrested and charged with murder and abandoning a body. Park Sung-yul was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment in ‘Blue Dragon Prison’ because he acknowledged his sin and had no previous convictions.

“Others might say you were lucky but I think that your observations skills and ability to carry it out is really great.”

“Other people call it my senses.”

“Haha. This brat.”

Kang-suk stared at Kim Do-shik with a serious expression.

“I would like to be in charge of this case. It felt like a gauntlet was sent to me, so I’ll definitely finish it.”

“It still isn’t sure if this is a case or not. Giving you solid support will be hard.”

Kang-suk touched his lips.

“It’s okay. If this is a hidden crime, the victims’ families will be waiting forever for them to return. If I can at least tell them the truth then I will be happy.”

Tracking down a hidden crime was hard. He couldn’t save anyone, and eventually people would end up unhappy. Even so, Kang-suk wanted to be in charge of the case.

“I understand. Starting today, you will be personally in charge of Park Sung-yul’s case. Although there won’t be a headquarters for the investigation, please work on it.”

Kang-suk closed his mouth and nodded. First of all, he had to interpret this stupid password.

“There is a child who likes these type of things.

Someone’s face popped into his head.

---

“It sounds interesting Let me help you.”

Joo Hyun-ho accepted Kang-suk’s offer in an instant.

“I feel relieved now that you have accepted, although it will be hard to get any proper support.”

“Originally, I wanted to catch Phantom together. But before that, we have to solve this.”

“You... Aren’t you lacking sincerity?”

“Sunbae is too serious. Wouldn’t it be better to clean this place up first?”

Kang-suk coughed and looked around.

He built a temporary investigation headquarters by borrowing a place that was originally a warehouse. It was inevitable that it would be filled with dusty boxes.

“Have you read Park Sung-yul’s letter?”

“Yes. I think he is overly self-conscious. Then let’s work on deciphering this.”

Kang-suk placed the Park Sung-yul’s letter and picture on the table.

“It is drawn with crayons that are commonly available in prisons, and the paper is cut out from a sketchbook.”

“Hrmm...”

Joo Hyun-ho pulled out his laptop that contained his profiling materials. He started to compare the picture to information he had about Park Sung-yul.

“Do you know something?”

“It is a simple trick. I think I’m probably right.”

“Hoh...”

Joo Hyun-ho pointed to the 5-1 that was written in the corner of Park Sung-yul’s picture.

“First of all, I can tell what this means just by looking.”

“5 – 1? Then it is 4. But why did he write his name after that?”

“It indicates the grade. In a picture contest at school, this information is often written down in the corner.

“T-that’s right.”

“Grade 5-1. Looking at Park Sung-yul, I can see the schools and classes that he graduated from. Perhaps he is talking about A Elementary School.”



“It could be middle school or high school.”

“There is no 5th grade.”

Kang-suk nodded with a convinced expression.

“First of all, we should go to this school.”

The two people headed to Park Sung-yul’s elementary school. Due to the fuel cost not being supported, he had to ride in Joo Hyun-ho’s car.

“There should at least be funding for fuel.”

“It’s okay. Thank you for doing this for me, even if it is interesting.”

The elementary school that Park Sung-yul was a branch school in the mountains. Surprisingly, Park Sung-yul’s teacher was still at the small school that didn’t even have 20 students. Of course, 20 years had passed so he was now the principal.

As he drank the tea that the principal made, Joo Hyun-ho started the questioning.

“Park Sung-yul? I still remember. He was a truly smart student.”

The principal looked into the air like he was reminiscing.

“I didn’t need to teach him much, and despite being an elementary school student, he had already learned up to the high school standard. He was a brilliant mind in this rural school. Four years ago... He came to visit me once. I thought he was a successful businessman because he was wearing a suit. By the way, what did he do? Why are detectives...”

Kang-suk felt sorry to shatter the principal’s memories, but he didn’t want to hide the truth.

“He is currently in prison for killing a person.”

“...That kid? I’m sorry Detective-nim. Anything you need...”

The principal bowed to Kang-suk.

“It isn’t Teacher’s fault. Get up. By the way, did Park Sung-yul ever join a painting contest in fifth grade?”

“Could you please wait a moment? Obviously the student journal .... “

The principal brought out the old papers where events were written down. After looking it over, he said,

“Ah, yes. There was a drawing contest for landscape paintings

when he was in the 5th grade. Sung-yol participated.”

“Then do you remember seeing this?”

Kang-suk extended Park Sung-yul’s drawing to the principal.

“I’m sorry but this was a long time ago... However, if he was the winner, then it might still be here. The branch school has a magic box that holds memories. It is hard to throw things away.”

The principal went back to the warehouse before bringing out a number of drawings.

“Here it is.”

Surprisingly, the same picture from Park Sung-yul’s letter was drawn on the faded paper. Kang-suk compared the two images and mnuttered.

“...It is exactly the same. Did he remember the painting from 20 years ago and drew it perfectly again?”

“I guess so Sunbae. It seems like he is bigger than I thought. How the hell did you catch him?”

“Senses.”

“Haha...”

The principal looked closely at the picture and said,

“Ah, I think I know where this place is.”

“Really?”

“I’m not sure but... It might fit. I’ll show you.”

Under the guidance of the principal, Kang-suk and Hyun-ho climbed a hill behind the school. Although it wasn’t very high, the landscape of the countryside appeared once they reached the top.

“Wait a minute...”

Kang-suk pulled out the painting and compared it to the surrounding landscape. It was an exact match. This landscape was the one in the picture.

“I guess it was the correct answer.”

Joo Hyun-ho talked to the principal. The principal told Joo Hyun-ho things like Park Sung-yul’s usual appearance and personality.

Kang-suk interrupted the two people and said,

“Park Sung-yul visited here a few years ago?”

“Yes. It was on Teacher’s Day.”

“Did he do anything questionable?”

“Not at all. Ah, the weather wasn’t that hot but he was sweating a lot.”

“...It can’t be.”

Kang-suk hurried down to the school. He had an idea. After gaining another teacher’s consent, he borrowed a shovel and returned.

“It seems like I should dig around. I don’t know how much time it will take alone, but I have to try it.”

The principal touched his mouth and said,

“Could you please wait a moment?” I’ll be happy to help.”

“I’m confident when it comes to shovelling.”

Kang-suk, Hyun-ho, and the principal recalled their memories of the army as they started digging. After two hours, the mountain

top was so messed up that there was no more places to dig.

“Is it not this mountain?”

Kang-suk asked while wiping his sweating head with a towel. Park Sung-yul might have lied to get them out here in the middle of nowhere. Maybe it was revenge for being trapped in prison?

At that moment, Joo Hyun-ho called out to Kang-suk in a heavy voice.

“Sunbae. Take a look at this. The land here is exceptionally good and...”

There was a body in a black plastic bag. The flesh was rotting, but he could tell it was a petite woman.

“...Well, I guess we found it. This is definitely a hidden crime. Park Sung-yul was right. He is a serial killer.”

Kang-suk used the radio to call for support.

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After Tae-hyuk recovered to a certain extent, he started to search the hospital.

When he entered the hallway, an alarm flashed on the Demon

## Revealing Mirror.

[The Forgery skill has found an intense image.]

[The work can be completed through automatic clerk mode.]

He looked up to see what room was in front of him.

“Surgery rooms.”

Tae-hyuk clicked his tongue and got rid of the screen of the Demon Revealing Mirror.

He knew what intense image would be drawn. There were more than 10 cases of abortion performed here every day. It felt like the entire hospital was shrouded by death. It was harder than expected to find a hidden passage.

“I guess I should use that.”

He was going to draw the entire hospital, just like how he drew all of Atlantis in order to escape. In order to do that, he needed a large drawing paper and a pencil.

“Excuse me! You shouldn’t be here!”

A nurse came running over after finding Tae-hyuk snooping in front of the operating room. Tae-hyuk put on as innocent an expression as possible and said.

“Noonim. I’m sorry. Do you have any pencil and paper?”

“N-Noonim... Are you the patient from Room 207? I understand. I’ll try.”

“Can it be as big as possible?”

The nurse blushed and nodded. He went back to his room and waited. The nurse came back with drawing paper and a pencil after 10 minutes.

“I-Is this okay?”

“Thank you Noonim.”

Tae-hyuk bowed his head.

The nurse smiled and sat on a chair in the corner of the room. Even if it was a back alley hospital, he was someone wealthy enough to be admitted to a single room. In addition, he had a fairly handsome face.

“It seems like drawing is your hobby.”



“I was in the art department at school. I was bored lying in bed.”

The two people chatted for a while. The nurse looked back just as she was about to leave the room.

“Can I come again next time to talk?”

“Of course.”

Tae-hyuk laughed.

It seemed like he had become more popular.

“Then shall I begin?”

Tae-hyuk used Spying to scan the whole hospital. He used the range expanding attribute that could only be used once a day and started to draw the place using the automatic function of Forgery. Now that he was fully accustomed to the skill, he could complete it easily.

“Hrmm...”

The hospital consisted of three levels. While looking around, he had felt the unique atmosphere of an old building. It really seemed like there would be secret rooms hidden somewhere.

Tae-hyuk's eyes shone as he looked at the blueprint. It was something that only Tae-hyuk could obtain with his crime skills.

“There really are hidden rooms.”

There weren't just only one or two rooms, but three.

“Wasn't this built by the Japanese? I guess they like things like this.”

Japan had constantly been at war since ancient times. Therefore, the shoguns directed soldiers to make pathways to escape and places to hide when building. It was the same here when this building was built 90 years ago.

“The problem is that the treasure map can be hidden in any of these three areas...”

Tae-hyuk laughed.

“Well, I have a lot of time. I can look at all of it.”

One of the places was on the ground floor, and two were in the basement.

Among them, the clue to the gold left behind by the Japanese army was hiding.

# Chapter 98 – Advance Notice Of A Storm #3

---

A few days later, it was Saturday night.

Since it was the weekend, the number of guards was minimized. Tonight he was going to look at the first floor, and he would look at the basement on Sunday night.

Tae-hyuk confirmed the guards' work schedule in advance.

“It would be a pain if I disguised myself as a guard and then caused a stir with a doppelganger.”

In order to prevent this, he registered the faces and voices of four security guards in the Demon Revealing Mirror. Luckily, he was able to get their clothes from the laundry room. It was the type of place where the employees brought their uniforms before leaving work. No one would notice that one more security guard was working during the weekend.

It was 11 o'clock on a Saturday night. The nurses' rounds tapered off at dusk so Tae-hyuk got up from the bed. He took out the guard's uniform that was hidden under the table. He chose a disguise that people wouldn't be surprised to see walking around, so a guard was perfect. There was no accessory, such as a security rod or key, but if someone asked then he could just say he forgot it.

“I worked as a guard in the past, so isn't this the perfect disguise?”

The security guards patrolled from the place of low importance to the place of high importance. If he understood their movements, then he would roughly know where they were. Of course, he could ignore such things and move around as he wished.

However, this was a back alley hospital where illegal operations were performed. Discipline was more strict compared to ordinary places. Otherwise, it wouldn't be controlled.

He used the memories of the future to grasp the patrol route of the security guards. Tae-hyuk looked at the pre-drawn blueprint. There were many areas marked with a highlighter, all places with cameras or areas that needed a key to enter and exit.

“No matter how I look at it, the ground floor is hard. There are a lot of CCTVs installed near the secret room. Moreover, the number of security guards that patrol that area is twice as high as other areas. This means the hospital also thinks it is important.”

Jung Eui-do had clearly said that he couldn't find any relics of the Japanese here, but why did he need to install so much equipment near that area? It was literally a contradiction.

“It means that he must be hiding something.”

Maybe he would obtain a clue to a crime.

“I haven't got any crime skills recently. Ohuhuhu.”

Tae-hyuk quietly slipped from his room and acted as a guard patrolling. The on-call nurse was dozing off at the desk.

“You worked hard.”

The nurse turned and glanced at Tae-hyuk.

“Hmphh... Work hard now. Oh, can you go to the boiler room and raise the temperature of the radiator? It is a bit chilly.”

“I understand.”

The nurse’s head started to shake like a pendulum again as she dozed off. She couldn’t imagine that the security guard she was talking to had been a fake.

‘She wouldn’t know if a bandit was having a feast in the next room.’

Tae-hyuk was able to safely pass the nurse and enter the warehouse. The blueprint showed that the secret room was in a corner. The size wasn’t so big so it was tight with two adult men. But it was perfect for hiding something. Tae-hyuk tapped the wall while listening carefully, then he found a different reaction.

“Well. Here it is.”

Once he arrived at a certain area, he heard a blunt sound, as if he was hitting an iron plate. Tae-hyuk took out a knife and carefully peeled off a section of the wallpaper. A large steel cabinet was exposed through the wooden panels. He touched the surface, but it didn't seem that old.

“Hrmm...”

Tae-hyuk cautiously opened the door. There were many documents that didn't have dust on them. He pulled out a few and read them. He could understand without needing to check any books. It contained brief information on people who had received surgery. There were also signs of buying and selling something.

“This much sensitive data isn't stored in digital form.”

As he turned over the papers, the Demon Revealing Mirror started ringing.

[Crime Skill: Illegal Surgery has been learned.]

-Various surgical operations can be done.

-However, treatment isn't possible.

-The criteria to fully learn it hasn't been met yet.

‘Illegal Surgery?! It seems to be an obscure skill...’

Tae-hyuk stopped his hand over the papers. The fact that the Demon Revealing Mirror responded meant there was something on the page that he just passed over. He was able to find it without any difficulty.

‘20 payments of nine million won... What is this?’

He couldn’t tell what it was for just by what was written. However, it was certain that this was associated with a crime. Once Tae-hyuk got what he wanted, he would slip out of here as quietly as possible.

However, it was a different story if he could get a crime skill. If he knew what the crime was and destroyed it, then he could get the opponent’s skill.

Tae-hyuk took as many photos as possible. Just the evidence of illegal abortions here was sufficient. He would send the information to Kim Do-shik and Cho Kang-suk using Phantom’s name, and they would take care of it. However, he had to find out what the hidden crime was.

“Maybe there isn’t just clues to a hidden treasure.”

Tae-hyuk returned the documents to their original place. He had enough 4K resolution photos on his SD card to cover the ceiling. It

was sufficient to read the text on the photos.

Tae-hyuk restored the wallpaper and quietly slipped out. It was time for the guards to make their rounds again.

All the puzzles would be solved tomorrow.

---

Blue Dragon was one of four prisons in the country operated using the American system.

It was built on an island far away from land, based on America's Alcatraz, a very famous prison where Al Capone was imprisoned. Among the four prisons of the Red Phoenix, Black Tortoise, Blue Dragon, and White Tiger, the Blue Dragon was famous for being the most like Alcatraz. Of course, the prisoners there were the ones who committed the worst crimes.

The reason why the prison was created was simple. A few politicians decided to declare war on crime before a general election. They were elected with a high percentage of votes on the premise that the public didn't have to share the same air as the criminals.

Thus, the prisons of the four gods were born.

“Weren't all the prisons built on naval bases that were built during the Japanese colonial period?”



Kang-suk read the data and asked Hyun-ho who was sitting across from him.

“Sunbae has a deep relationship with that place.”

“Huh? Why?”

“Yoo Cheol-ho is now trapped there so that he can’t escape from jail again.”

“Kuoong... That name sounds familiar.”

Kang-suk groaned as he remembered Yoo Cheol-ho. The case had occurred over six months ago. Yoo Cheol-ho had a high bounty on him after breaking out and Kang-suk met a weird student in the process.

“I’ve been quite busy since then.”

“With who? Sister in law?”

“S-Sister in law... C-Cough!”

Kang-suk turned bright red and coughed.

“Aish, please eat your noodles quicker.”

“I-I’m trying!”

The reason why Cho Kang-suk and Joo Hyun-ho gathered in the police library’s data room to investigate the prison was simple: Park Sung-yul was imprisoned there. Kang-suk suddenly thought of something.

“Then Park Sung-yul is in the same prison as Yoo Cheol-ho?”

“That’s right. Isn’t it filled with criminal all-stars?”

“He told me that he would escape again from the next place he was imprisoned. Well, he would need to swim to get out of there.”

“That’s right. He would need to be a human seal.”

“Then it would be good to see him after a long time.”

Kang-suk laughed.

Park Sung-yul confessed that he was a serial murderer who killed 14 people. Kang-suk didn’t know if it was the truth, but after following the puzzle he sent, they discovered another body.

“Have the autopsy results come back?”

“Only that it happened a long time ago and that she died when she was in her late 20s.”

“In the end, figuring out her identity is something we have to do from now on.”

Kang-suk nodded without saying anything. From now on, Cho Kang-suk and Joo Hyun-ho would go to question the criminal who was in jail.

They had to go to the infamous Blue Dragon Prison and find out if what he was saying was true.

“Park Sung-yul had been stuck in jail for three years. If he committed murder, it was a crime that is at least three years old. All the evidence will be lost to the passage of time. We might literally have to put the pieces together like a puzzle.”

Joo Hyun-ho smiled widely.

“But there is no mystery that Sunbae and I can’t solve.”

“Why not? You know...”

“That guy itself is a foul.”

After half a day, the two people boarded a ship heading for Blue Dragon Prison.

---

“Detectives, you have come.”

The prison warden smiled and welcomed Kang-suk and Hyun-ho. The officer who guided them to the door bowed.

“Then have a good time!”

“Uh, thank you.”

Hyun-ho whispered to Kang-suk.

“Sunbae. The atmosphere here is strange.”

“Hey. Be careful what you say. Sound carries.”

“Come come, please sit down here first. I will come back with tea and refreshments.”

Kang-suk said quietly,

“Warden-nim. Thank you for your sincerity. I only have 10 minutes for the visit. I would like to meet him right away.”

Then the warden laughed,

“You don’t know how to deal with the prisoners yet. Visitation days are like festivals to them. They get a morning bath and they can wear neat clothes that they don’t normally wear. In their eyes, the people of the world... Ah, I’m sorry. I’ll correct it to the outside world. At any rate, everything will be the same. So why don’t you go and make them wait? Then you will be able to hear what you want from them. I think they are great people.”

“Then you are telling us to go late on purpose?”

“Until the coffee cools and the beer foam disappears. You should be roughly 20~30 minutes late. That is the law in dealing with them.”

It was definitely a hierarchical relationship. It was the way of the guards. It seemed useless but the warden was a man who worked with prisoners for decades. He had more experience in dealing with them.

Hyun-ho saw that Kang-suk’s expression wasn’t good and said,

“Sunbae, let’s do as the warden said. Deliberately delaying the appointment is also a technique used in negotiation.”

Two people were making the same argument. Kang-suk licked his lips.

“I understand. Then I will have a cup of tea before going.”

“I have some good quality tea leaves.”

Kang-suk went to see Park Sung-yul after spending a moderate amount of time drinking tea and eating sweets. The officer warned them before they entered the room,

“Even if he is tied up, I don’t know what he will do. Be careful.”

It was encouraged to only converse with prisoners while fully shielded by tempered glass. However, Kang-suk said that he would talk in the family visitation room. The other person would be wearing a straitjacket but he would be in the same room.

Hyun-ho nodded and said,

“Well, will you be able to obtain information by feeling it with your skin?”

It wasn’t wrong but the nuances were strange.

Kang-suk elbowed Hyun-ho’s side.

“Something like that. Also, the atmosphere is important in an interrogation. I can tell whether it is a lie or truth based on the air he breathes onto my skin.”

“In short, your senses.”

Kang-suk laughed at the words. but it was right.

Park Sung-yul was sitting at a table in the corner of the visitation room. Despite wearing a straitjacket for over 30 minutes, his face was full of relaxation. He had a sophisticated look that would make him look like a business executive if he was wearing a suit instead of the prisoner jumpsuit.

Park Sung-yul laughed when he saw Kang-suk, as if he was meeting an old friend.

“Detective Cho Kang-suk! I’ve been looking forward to seeing you for a long time. I wanted to see you.”

“...Park Sung-yul.”

“Huh?”

Kang-suk skipped all the trivial things and threw a fastball at once.

“Did you really kill 14 people?”

Park Sung-yul was silent for a moment before slowly opening his mouth.

## Chapter 99 – Advance Notice Of A Storm #4

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“What are you talking about? I didn’t kill anyone. I’m innocent and was wrongfully locked up in prison.”

“What?”

“Did you think I was such a monster? If so, you are mistaken.”

Kang-suk stared at Park Sung-yul with an absurd expression. If he was a rookie then he would be confused if he encountered such an opponent, and wouldn’t be able to interrogate him properly. But now he was a detective who caught many horrible criminals. He didn’t show any panic. If he did then he would be playing right into Park Sung-yul’s hands.

Kang-suk instantly returned to his usual calm.

“Is that so? By the way, have you eaten lunch yet?”

Park Sung-yul’s mouth twitched at the calm answer.

“If I knew you were coming so late then I would’ve eaten beforehand.”

“You didn’t eat while you were waiting? Would you like jajangmyeon to be delivered? Oh, they don’t deliver here. In other words, I’ll have to ask the kitchen. Is ramyun okay?”



“Yes. It is good.”

“Then some ramyun please. Bring a pot with lots of water. There should be enough for three to five people.”

Kang-suk called the guards and asked them to boil ramyun noodles. After 10 minutes, three pots were delivered to the visitation room.

“What do you know? This ramyun is exactly to my tastes.”

“It seems like it.”

Park Sung-yul was hungry and instantly emptied the pot full of noodles. Kang-suk asked as he ate the food,

“Since you are so far away, I guess you don’t have many people visiting?”

“Even if I was on land, no one would come.”

“Is that so? Weren’t you close to the daughter of your old boarding house landlord?”

“I’m sorry but I don’t remember since it was so long ago.”

“Well. I understand. At any rate, tell me if you want more. I’ll have them boil extra.”

“It is okay, I’m full.”

Since then, the detective and criminal talked like they were old friends. Kang-suk didn’t ask anymore about Park Sung-yul’s letter and soon, the one hour of visitation time was over. Kang-suk got up and asked,

“Is there anything else to talk about?”

“I had a great time meeting a person after a while. See you next time.”

“Next time? Yes. Well, I’ll see what happens first.”

“Yes Detective, take care.”

Hyun-ho, who was sitting at the table next to Kang-suk, also got up and gave a thumbs up. It meant that Kang-suk was as good of an interrogator as he said beforehand.

Cho Kang-suk sighed slowly. This really didn’t suit him.

---

After the interrogation, the detective and investigator talked

about it in the waiting room.

“Is it truly the boarding house?”

“I think it is obvious from his reaction. By the way, your brain is very good.”

“Don’t even say it.”

The two men had decided in advance what direction to take the conversation, based on Park Sung-yul’s answer.

Kang-suk was well aware of what he was lacking. Therefore, he left the thinking to Joo Hyun-ho. After reading the letter from Park Sung-yul, Hyun-ho had investigated everything about him. In particular, he looked for any people who went missing in the vicinity of Park Sung-yul.

The one who caught Joo Hyun-ho’s attention was the daughter of the landlord of a boarding house where Park Sung-yul stayed for a while. Hyun-ho read her profile and muttered,

“Her age at the time of her disappearance is consistent. It was found that she had an argument with Park Sung-yul a few days before she went missing.”

“Then why was the incident buried when Park Sung-yul was arrested?”

“There was only circumstantial evidence, no physical ones. Furthermore, he had a decisive alibi.”

At the time she went missing, Park Sung-yul was in China.

“Hmmm...”

“Anyway, I requested a DNA test so we should figure out the correct identity in a few days.”

“This makes it more likely that Park Sung-yul’s words are true. But why did he suddenly change his words?”

“I’m not sure what Park Sung-yul is thinking. Besides, I think he also wanted to slip into the conversation that he killed the landlord’s daughter.”

Kang-suk quietly groaned.

“Ahem...”

A criminal had confessed his sins in a letter. He threw clues one by one like puzzle pieces.

“Maybe Park Sung-yul is enjoying playing with the police. In addition, the first puzzle was based on things about him. It feels like he gave us the easiest puzzle first.”

“Damn. So now we have to wait until he throws us another puzzle?”

“There are 12 people left...”

“It will never end this way.”

However, he didn't want to give up. He didn't want the 12 murders committed by Park Sung-yul to forever remain as hidden cases. Kang-suk discovered that Hyun-ho was making a strange expression, meaning that he had a secret plan.

“What are you thinking?”

Hyun-ho licked his lips and his eyes lit up. It looked like he was enjoying the puzzle made by Park Sung-yul.

“Park Sung-yul wants to play with us. Sunbae, do you know how to unconditionally win in poker?”

“Well. Don't you win if you can read your opponent's face?”

“...There is such a thing. Well, there is something simpler. There should be a spy to tell you the opponent's hand.”

Cho Kang-suk realized what Joo Hyun-ho wanted: It was to have a spy monitor Park Sung-yul's movements in the Blue Dragon

Prison. Kang-suk folded his arms and frowned.

“It is a little bit like cheating but... The method isn’t bad. The problem is finding someone to spy on Park Sung-yul in Blue Dragon Prison.

It was best to use a prisoner as a source of intelligence. The guards were considered public enemies by the monitored and controlled prisoners. So there was a strange sense of fellowship and they often exchanged stories in secret.

In other prisons, there were people imprisoned for three to six months for misdemeanor crimes such as theft. Most of them could be used as sources of information. If they were discovered as a spy then their lives could be in danger. In the end, the ones who would be stuck in jail for a long time wouldn’t act as spies.

“...I think it will be fine if Hyung approaches them with the offer of reducing their sentence.”

Kang-suk spoke in a strong tone.

“Absolutely not!”

“Then do you have a good idea?”

“If we can’t get it from the inside, can’t we get it from the outside?”

In other words, imprison someone in Blue Dragon Prison who would act as their spy.

“Oh, that is good. It’s definitely possible to do that if we get the permission of the warden. Ah right, no police. Criminals have a really sensitive smell towards the police.”

“If they are discovered as a spy then they might be lynched...”

First of all, it needed to be a person who wouldn’t be unnatural in prison. In addition, in order to become familiar with other criminals, they needed a special crime that would grab attention.

“Someone who looks like a criminal, has courage, and also has strength... I think a masked superhero would be needed to satisfy all the conditions.”

“Kuoong... The right person...”

Kang-suk desperately thought about who could fit into the Blue Dragon Prison.

At that moment, someone popped into his mind.

“Ah!”

---

“Ooof...!”

Tae-hyuk was nauseous as he entered the room. A dark aura of death was pouring out from it. There was no need to activate the Spying skill. As he walked to the center, something stuck to his shoes. When he checked his foot, he saw something like crushed meat.

This was one of the two secret rooms in the basement of the hospital. The place where the relics of the Japanese military would be somewhere that hadn't been touched for decades. However, this place showed evidence of being frequented by somebody.

“...The result is a boom.”

He felt a cold chill like he was in a freezer. Tae-hyuk looked at the plastic bags piled up in the middle of the room. There was something small in them. He brought his hand to a bag to see what it was.

At that moment, a strange illusion emerged in front of Tae-hyuk's eyes.

“Heok!”

It was the same as when he entered the bathroom that the hippo had killed in. However, unlike then, he didn't see anybody being killed. Instead, he heard a conversation.



-I need a liver. The shape can't be broken.

-You don't want finely chopped pieces?

-Yes, that's right.

-Of course, all organs are extracted as they are. You don't have to be worry. If you wish then we can do a wholesale trade.

-I would like to do it if the price is worth it. Is 10 possible?

“.....”

Tae-hyuk was at a loss for words. He figured out what they were trading. It was the organs of the aborted fetuses.

The words of Jung Eui-do momentarily popped into his head.

-Our clinic does abortions up to 36 months.

This was the reason. Tae-hyuk had seen a similar sight not long ago. T Medical Centre had kidnapped children and extracted their organs for transplant surgery. However, the purpose of the ones buying the fetuses here...

“Sheesh, I can't unsee this.”

The bags were filled with the bodies of those who weren't born. They were piled up in a frozen warehouse like pig and cattle meat. Tae-hyuk captured it all on camera. Once this was revealed, the media would become heated up for a while.

Tae-hyuk left the room and pulled out the blueprint in his back pocket. In the end, the last remaining place was definitely where the Japanese army hid the treasure map.

“I know why it went unnoticed for decades.”

The entrance was the bottom of an old well in the backyard. There was a passage to enter from the basement, but it seemed to have been covered over with concrete when a boiler room was made. In the end, it was either go down the well, or smash the concrete floor with a pickaxe.

It was one of the reasons why he left it for last.

“Everybody in the building would come running if I use a pickaxe. I have to use the well.”

Tae-hyuk walked towards the backyard.

---

The well wasn't difficult to find. It hadn't been used for a long time so there was a rusty chain around it. Weeds were growing

around it. Anyone who didn't know there was a well here would mistake it for someone's grave.

Tae-hyuk equipped the iron pipe using the Violence skill and struck the chain surrounding the well.

Kaaang!

It was rusty so the chain was removed more easily than he thought.

“Then let's go down.”

Whether it was completely dry or filled with water, the depths of the well looked like an abyss. Tae-hyuk held a flashlight in his mouth and climbed down. After 10 meters, he reached the bottom.

“Isn't it okay if I am a little noisy at this depth?”

He placed the iron pipe between the pipes and put strength into it. The stones cracked and the well wall collapsed. The result was a passage leading somewhere. Tae-hyuk widened the hole so that his body could fit through and entered.

“Damn. Rat pellets...”

Tae-hyuk rubbed the foreign matter on his hands against the wall and straightened his body. There was a small space that was only

one pyeong large. Several wooden boxes were stacked.

“Well. These are canned foods.”

It wasn't the one pull type that appeared these days, but cans that required a special opener.

“Bingo. This is a shelter created by the Japanese.”

Tae-hyuk spat out some dust and started to search the room.

“I-I found it!”

It was a small room, so he could easily find what he was looking for. Tae-hyuk looked at the document with joy.

“Ohuhu... I imagined something like a rolled parchment paper... Isn't this a plain file folder?”

It was a little yellow, which wasn't surprising, but the state of preservation wasn't bad. Tae-hyuk quietly started to read it. It was written in Japanese so he had to get help from a translation application installed on his smartphone.

“...We have decided to keep all the remaining war funds in a designated place... The general manager is Yamashita Toshiro...”

Tae-hyuk's hands trembled.

“T-This is Yamashita's gold!”

During a building renovation, an astronomical amount of gold was found. Now it was sleeping in a place where no one could touch it. He held the location where it was hidden.

Tae-hyuk's fingers started shaking.

“Aha, ahahaha!”

He burst out laughing. A few billion. There was treasure worth billions of won, and it would soon enter his hands.

“It looks like I can build a castle for my sister's wedding gift, not just buy her a house.”

But this wasn't the end. Everything he imagined could become possible. It wasn't just changing his future. With this, he could have a completely new life. It wouldn't be too difficult to dispose of it using the Phantom's ability.

“Now, where is the treasure actually hidden?”

Tae-hyuk glanced at the map in the documents, but something was wrong. It was the first time he saw it, but something was familiar.

“...This is the Blue Dragon?”

Tae-hyuk shouted out loud. The place on the map was the Blue Dragon Prison where he would be imprisoned in the future.

“I see. So that’s what happened.”

Tae-hyuk realized why Yamashita’s gold was only discovered two years later. It was a ruin that no one had entered for decades before the Blue Dragon Prison was built. Two years later, the Blue Dragon Prison started a massive expansion. It was during the construction that Yamashita’s gold was found.

Tae-hyuk lived in Blue Dragon Prison for 10 years. The expansion work continued even when Tae-hyuk was imprisoned, so he definitely remembered where it was.

“In the end, I need to go back to where I died to get the gold.”

Tae-hyuk quietly smirked.

# Chapter 100 – Accomplice #1

---

“Sunbae, can you give me the newspaper clippings?”

“Yes.”

Hyun-ho, who was organizing the materials at the investigation headquarters, called out to Kang-suk sitting on the other side. They were investigating all of the tracks of one man. The workload was much greater than he had thought. He hadn't been able to go home for a few days since he returned from the Blue Dragon Prison.

It was the same with Kang-suk. He was writing a report that had to be handed in to his superiors in a few hours.

“Here.”

Hyun-ho received the report from Kang-suk and checked the necessary items before yawning and getting up.

“This is never ending... A genius investigator is doing paperwork. I should ask for more people from the chief.”

“The taste is gone. Let's go out and get a cup of coffee.”

“Yes.”

Hyun-ho's face brightened at the thought of taking a break. Kang-suk exited the investigation headquarters and walked to a vending machine in the hallway. Hyun-ho followed behind him. It was late so there was no one else in the hallway.

Kang-suk pulled out a 1,000 won bill from his pocket and asked.

“Black?”

“Today I am a sugar-type person. Sugar is required for my head to work.”

“Is that so? I am originally a coffee shop person.”

Kang-suk bought coffee with lots of sugar and cream. The two people talked to each other while drinking coffee with their backs against the wall.

“Isn't it about time to receive the DNA results?”

“It should be coming by this evening or tomorrow. If that is a match then we should be able to get some support.”

Hyun-ho was waiting for the identity of the body found a few days ago. It was the only clue they got from solving Park Sung-yul's puzzle. They needed to know who it was so that they could specify that Park Sung-yul was the culprit in this case.



At that moment, Kang-suk's phone started ringing.

"It comes just as we are speaking about it."

The phone screen showed brief results along with the autopsy from the coroner. Hyun-ho's eyes shone.

"Are the results out?"

"Yes. There is a 98% probability that it is a family member of the boarding house landlord."

"...Then now we can start a full-fledged investigation."

It was clear that Park Sung-yul was involved in another murder.

Kang-suk gulped down the bit of coffee that was remaining. Then he squeezed the paper cup with his fist and threw it into the trash.

"Don't we have something to do before that?"

"Huh?"

Something to do before the investigation?

Hyun-ho looked at Kang-suk with confusion.

---

“Sob... J-Ji-young...”

Park Sung-yul’s boarded house owner and Kim Ji-young’s mother burst out crying.

The National Institute of Scientific Investigation had finished their investigation into the corpse and had it cremated. The owner of the boarding house collapsed as her daughter returned after four years.

Hyun-ho said in a small voice to Kang-suk sitting next to him,

“I was too involved in the investigation and I forgot about the most important thing for a moment.”

Kang-suk stroked his head without saying anything. Hyun-ho was surprised and moved two meters away from Kang-suk.

“Hyah! S-Sunbae! Is this your taste?”

“...What are you saying? Do you want me to turn your head into a rock?”

Hyun-ho desperately waved his hands,

“I’m sorry to keep you waiting like this.”

Kang-suk pulled out a handkerchief and handed it to the boarding house owner.

She accepted it and spoke while wiping her tears.

“No, Detective-nim. I’m really grateful that Ji-young is home.”

“.....”

“I don’t know how long I’ve been searching. Travelling around the country and putting up missing flyers... Every day I go to a place that Ji-young would frequent... If you hadn’t found her...”

Kang-suk’s eyes turned red. It was the first time his heart was sore from hearing thank you.

“Now that you found her, I can have the funeral... I can send off my daughter.”

Kang-suk opened his mouth and said to the owner of the boarding house.

“Thank you for your cooperation. Please contact me about the funeral.”

The owner of the boarding house bowed before getting up. Then she whispered as she embraced the precious urn.

“Ji-young, Mother is here. I baked your favourite ribs... You must’ve been hungry for a while huh?”

Kang-suk and Hyun-ho looked at each other and said nothing as the boarding house owner left.

“Huu...”

Kang-suk leaned back on the couch and sighed. He put his wrist to his forehead like he was tired. A hoarse voice emerged from his mouth.

“That aunty... Until the end, she didn’t say any words of resentment towards Park Sung-yul. Rather, she might feel regret that he became a killer. What is that bastard? People... Damn...”

Hyun-ho gazed at Kang-suk and said in a low voice,

“Sunbae. The average of missing people is over 30,000 a year. Not all of them are the victims of a hidden crime but...”

Kang-suk stood up and shouted,

“Are you glad you found the body now?”

“.....”

“...I’m sorry. I know you don’t think that, I think I’m a little tired.”

“No, it’s okay. If you’re tired, do you want to go to the sauna? I’ll pay.”

“No thanks. Anyway, did you investigate what I asked you to?”

It had been 10 days since finding Ji-young’s body. In addition, Park Sung-yul had remained silent since then. So how long would it take to find the remaining 12 people that he said he killed?

The best way was to plant a spy in the Blue Dragon Prison where Park Sung-yul was staying. He tried to find someone using all his connections, but it was in vain.

“There is a lot of acting to be done. It is too much for the criminals I know.”

However, he couldn’t hear a positive answer from Hyun-ho.

“So I told you to check with the other detectives.”

Detectives who caught criminals were well aware of their ecology. Therefore, they might know people inside criminal organizations.

“I know. Most of them are busy with what they are doing right now. In addition, criminals who are free changed after hearing the words Blue Dragon. They said that monsters are imprisoned there.”

“Huu...”

Kang-suk sighed. He would do it himself if he could. However, there were two criminals who knew Kang-suk's face in Blue Dragon. One was Park Sung-yul, the target, and the other one was Yoo Cheol-ho.

“...I have no choice but to ask him.”

Joo Hyun-ho recalled how Kang-suk said a few days ago that only Phantom could do this.

“Still, collaborating with Phantom...”

“He is the best. Didn't you hear about the Killer case? Phantom can imitate other people's faces. He also knows a lot about criminals. Furthermore, don't you remember the Bomber incident? He penetrated the psychology of the culprit. If it is the Phantom, he will be able to get everything from Park Sung-yul.”

Hyun-ho fought with Phantom. He didn't want to acknowledge it, but Phantom had a terrifying ability.

“...But will he want to be a source of police information?”

“I will fall to my knees and beg him if he contacts me. He isn’t a sociopath who doesn’t understand a person’s feelings. If I ask...”

In order to find out the truth of the murders, a detective was willing to fall to his knees before a murderer.

“Sunbae...”

But Hyun-ho didn’t want to see that. In the end, he said something with a determined expression.

“How about hiring him with money? He did ask for money in return for capturing criminals.”

“Well, this isn’t like the Bomber case. I don’t think 100 million won will come out of the budget for this case... However, it does seem like the best method. I’ll ask the commissioner.”

“If you don’t have enough budget then I’ll add a little bit. I’ll cooperate as much as possible with Phantom.”

Kang-suk nodded quietly. He decided to try everything he could, with kneeling as a last resort.

“...Anyway, first Phantom needs to contact me.”

“Keep talking, he might call just because your voice will tickle his ears.”

“Aish, it can’t be.”

Dururu-

There was suddenly a call. Kang-suk stared at the phone. The called ID said God of Crime.

“Eh! Sunbae! Did Phantom actually come? You did tickle his ears.”

“Shush. I need some quiet to receive the call.”

He pressed the call button and brought the phone to his ear.

–Have you been well? Detective Cho Kang-suk.

Kang-suk gulped and quietly opened his mouth.

---

Tae-hyuk was talking to An Eun-young while lying in bed.

“I have to stay in the hospital for two, maybe three more weeks. Please tell Teacher Jung Nam-ho.”



-Y-Yes. But if you are hospitalized, come to our hospital... No. If you can move, will you come to our hospital tomorrow? There is a double room empty.

“No. I have to stay here.”

-T-Then let me know the address! I will back you a delicious lunch and go visit!

Tae-hyuk swallowed his saliva.

An Eun-young had been strangely active starting from a week ago.

Tae-hyuk discovered that her mother had passed away before An Eun-young arrived at the hospital. He then used his crime skills to deceive her. He acted like her mother who was happy about hearing her daughter's admission into university.

He definitely did it for An Eun-young, but he still couldn't help wondering if it was okay. Class President would think it was the truth for the rest of her life. Perhaps he had committed an unreasonable crime. Therefore, he felt guilt every time he heard An Eun-young's voice.

“...I think tomorrow will be okay. Can you come then?”

–Yes!

“I understand. The place...”

Tae-hyuk gave her the address of the hospital. He was going to shatter this place in a few days, so it wouldn't be too bad to have a break before that.

–Then I will see you tomorrow. I'll make a lot of delicious things!

Tae-hyuk ended the conversation with An Eun-young and called Kang-suk this time. Of course, he used the Phantom dedicated phone.

[Voice Modulation has been used.]

-You can directly imitate the voice of Kim Bum-soo.

He didn't know if it was due to his crime skills or his stamina that was over 50 points, but Tae-hyuk showed great resilience. Looking at his outward appearance right now, it didn't seem like he had been shot in the head.

‘Then it is time to move.’

In fact, he wanted to be more stable for a week or so. However,

there was something that shouldn't be missed today.

‘Wasn't Park Sung-yul's second puzzle released three days later?’

Park Sung-yul, the serial killer who murdered 14 people.

He said that he treated the victims he liked like a puzzle. Tae-hyuk only had rough information about him. His memories were faint and blurry. He was already dead when Tae-hyuk entered the prison.

‘The cause of death was suicide.’

Park Sung-yul had revealed his puzzle pieces to the police. He felt great joy when he saw the embarrassed police being unable to solve it. However, there was a police investigator who was called a genius. Although it took a long time, he ended up solving all of the puzzles.

Park Sung-yul was found dead in the bathroom.

Tae-hyuk knew the ending of the Park Sung-yul case. Unfortunately, only a few knew about the contents of the puzzle. Originally, he would've ignored this case since all of the victims had already died and were hidden somewhere. He wouldn't get any affinity points from them and they also didn't have weapons that could be used like the Triads killer.

However, Tae-hyuk had a reason to grab Park Sung-yul. In the

Blue Dragon Prison, the gold bars hidden by the Japanese were hidden. It would be hard to enter there, even with Phantom's abilities. He intended to use the pretext of cooperating with the police in order to infiltrate Blue Dragon.

‘Hopefully, I can eat all the gold alone.’

Either way, it would solve the case that would cause the police's mind to rot over the next two years. It absolutely wouldn't be a loss for the police. Tae-hyuk opened his mouth after confirming that Kang-suk had received the call.

“Have you been well? Detective Cho Kang-suk.”

–P-Phantom...!

“You seem to be working on a hard puzzle while I rested.”

–...How did you know?

“That is a trade secret. I contacted you today because I wanted to give the police a nice present.

–More than that, what about the bombs and weapons from the killer? If you hand them over then I will talk to the commissioner about reducing your other sins...

“I definitely gave you the opportunity. It was the police who

betrayed me. At any rate, the bombs are in a very safe place. So the only thing left is to talk to you in person.”

–You want to meet?

“Yes. The time is two days later in the evening. I will contact you again with further details.”

–W-Wait a minute...!

Tae-hyuk ignored Kang-suk’s cries and hung up. Once the news came, the police would be upset.

He closed his eyes and thought about how he could get the most out of this.

First, he should take a break.

# Chapter 101 – Accomplice #2

---

Kang-suk reported his progress to the police chief.

Originally, he would have to contact Kim Do-shik first, but the superintendent ordered that anything related to Phantom was to be reported directly to him. Could it be due to the unpleasant situation that happened to the former police commissioner due to Phantom and the Bomber? The newly appointed police commissioner was desperate to catch Phantom.

Kang-suk was aware of this face and said as gently as possible.

“First of all, I would like to negotiate with him. He seems to know something about the Park Sung-yul case.”

Then he heard an angry voice over the phone,

–Detective Cho. What does that mean? What? Since when did the police work with criminals? And the Park Sung-yul case? There was something like that?

Kang-suk was perplexed but he finished as calmly as possible.

“...I uploaded the report a week ago. I also have new information that will be uploaded again today.”

–Hrmm. Really? Do you think I am a leisurely person that can

worry about all those little things? Last weekend, I was running around with government officials and was tired. At any rate, there will be no negotiations. I will get as much support troops for you as I can. I will make sure that Detective Cho's commands are listened to. I'll also take you to the opera this year. If there is anything else, report it immediately.

“Yes, I understand.”

Kang-suk's expression darkened in an instant. The superintendent wanted to give priority to catch Phantom rather than finding Park Sung-yul's victims. It felt like his eyes would turn red from hunting Phantom.

In the end, Kang-suk's forehead wrinkled as he frowned.

Hyun-ho, who had been waiting for the conversation with the Gangdong police superintendent to end, said to Kang-suk,

“I'm guessing the negotiations didn't go so well?”

“Yes. In order to get some support troops, I have to catch Phantom.”

“Whoa. Catch that monster? Now that he has the weapons...”

Joo Hyun-ho enlarged the excel table on his table screen, which summarized the current armed state of Phantom. He still had two bombs that could blow up buildings, and that wasn't all. Didn't he

obtain Cold War firearms from the Triads killer?

“In addition, he has strange abilities that can’t be identified. Even highly trained special forces wouldn’t be able to catch him without any casualties.”

“It might be tough and it probably won’t end simply. Do you remember how he took the money during the Bomber incident? It is like the police are playing on the palm of his hands.”

Kang-suk sighed.

“He seems great because you say so.”

“At any rate, what will you do?”

“What else? Follow the command from the upper ranks.”

“Don’t get too depressed. If Phantom is arrested then you can try and get what he knows about Park Sung-yul in the interrogation process.”

“Who is depressed!”

Hyun-ho laughed.

“It isn’t easy to throw a ball into a bucket if you don’t know



where to throw it. First, let's focus on arresting Phantom."

"...That seems to be for the best."

A lot of preparations were needed for the troops to move and the opponent was armed with powerful firearms and bombs. A lot of preparation was needed to deal with him. Then Kang-suk spoke like he just remembered,

"But... Can we really catch the Phantom? I'm not sure if that is possible."

"....."

Even the genius investigator couldn't come up with an answer.

---

Phantom, the criminal that the police were looking for, was in a bit of a difficult situation right now.

"Now. Try it."

"....."

Tae-hyuk looked at Eun-young, who was trying to feed him a sandwich, with an absurd expression. He had recovered enough to wrestle, but he had to keep that a secret from Eun-young.

‘I might not be able to go to school for a while so I need to get help from Class President. Let’s do what she wants.’

“Um. Delicious. Is everything homemade?”

An Eun-young brightened as he ate her sandwich.

“Y-Yes!”

“Ah right, please pass this on to Teacher-nim. It is my diagnosis.”

Tae-hyuk reached in a drawer and pulled out the documents he prepared in advance. Of course, it was an elaborate fake. It wasn’t that hard to create. After copying the original, he just needed to adjust the ailment and treatment period at the bottom. A technique that could forge a medical certificate or a painting...

He couldn’t help sighing as he thought about it.

An Eun-young’s eyes narrowed as she received the medical certificate and started to look it over carefully.

“Eight weeks?”

“Fortunately, it is spring break soon. I think I can get better before school starts again. Then I will be a third year...”

In the end, An Eun-young exploded. She grabbed Tae-hyuk's arm and pulled it towards her chest.

“T-Tae-hyuk!”

“Eh? Eh?”

The confused Tae-hyuk couldn't say anything for a moment. The distance between the both of them was close enough for a hug. He could feel An Eun-young's breath on him and he couldn't look straight ahead.

“This room. It is a one person room. There won't be anyone who can interfere.”

“I-Is that so?”

“I actually came here to do this.”

“What do you mea...?”

“You will be in hospital for a while, so I have to do it.”

“Wait a minute, let's just calm down. I think you are a little too excited right now.”

“Oh, I’ve been thinking about this for a long time.”

“What are you doing?”

An Eun-young came closer to Tae-hyuk before grabbing the bag that she had thrown on the bed and returning to her original position.

“I came packed with everything necessary... Don’t be too nervous, I have been preparing this every day.”

“Ugh...”

Tae-hyuk groaned.

An Eun-young’s condition was strange. Then he discovered something in her words.

“Every day? D-Don’t tell me...”

“Yes. You need to study.”

“Ah...”

An Eun-young started pulling out books and printouts from her bag with an excited face. Then she grinned as she placed them on the bed.

“How much are you going to fall behind in class? You have to really work hard to not fall behind so you can go to university. We have to work hard to get you into university.”

Tae-hyuk was at a loss for words.

He had promised to go to university together, but it seemed like she had misunderstood it as going to the same university. However, this wasn't a situation where he could correct it.

Tae-hyuk swallowed his saliva.

‘D-Don’t tell me. Is this withdrawal symptoms?’

An Eun-young was a model student with the studying skill. She studied most of the day. Thanks to her skill, she was very good at teaching others how to study. However, after getting accepted into university, she didn't need to do as much studying as before. In addition, Tae-hyuk who she studied with every day was admitted to hospital. For that reason, she didn't seem to spend as much time studying as she used to.

That rebound had come all at once.

Tae-hyuk gulped. He didn't know if the withdrawal symptoms were due to her skill, or simply because of her personality. The only certainty was that he would have to study with her for all of today. It was literally ‘only’ studying.

He couldn't help screaming.

“S-Save me...”

---

Kang-suk finished his conversation with Phantom and made a determined expression. Joo Hyun-ho, who came along with him as a partner, stood with a serious expression. Usually, that seriousness would be gone already but this was an emergency situation.

Behind Joo Hyun-ho was the special unit waiting for the police superintendent.

Hyun-ho muttered in a low voice that could only be heard by Kang-suk.

“He is an unbelievable great guy.”

Kang-suk ignored the strange person in the trench coat and told the police superintendent.

“Superintendent-nim. 30 minutes. The meeting is at XX Building. It seems like he has accepted negotiations because there is something he wants from the police.”

The police superintendent nodded with a satisfied expression.

“Well done. Will he be armed?”

“Probably. He is very careful and smart. He will run away if there is even the slightest sign of anything happening.”

“Yes. First of all, I want you to go in and talk to him as much as possible. Meanwhile, the special forces will enter to suppress the opponent.”

“Yes...”

Kang-suk's expression clouded over. Even if he wore a bulletproof vest, the opponent was a terrorist armed with bombs and firearms. He was being used as bait to catch such a person.

Kang-suk couldn't refuse the unreasonable command.

A police superintendent who was more interested in the achievement than catching criminals. The police commissioner was the same as well. He felt nauseous but it couldn't be helped. He was the only one who could act as bait right now.

Kang-suk closed his mouth and nodded. He decided to come back alive no matter what. And after this incident, Ha-ran...

“Then Detective Cho Kang-suk, please head to the scheduled

place. The whole crew will be armed and waiting for the signal.”

The superintendent was entrusted with full authority by the police commissioner. Thus, his neck was stiff.

The superintendent exclaimed in a voice that didn't seem dignified at all.

“It is time to strip off Phantom's mask!”

XX Building was approximately 20 minutes away by car. Kang-suk made his way to the destination in a military van. The commandos chief in charge of the vehicle smiled and said,

“Detective-nim, don't worry. Our members were trained to compete with the US counter-terrorism forces.”

Kang-suk's mouth twitched.

He was going to confront Phantom, who was armed with bombs and guns, alone. If the opponent wanted, then he could put a bullet in Kang-suk's head.

Kang-suk muttered sarcastically,

“A well trained crew won't be able to stop a bomb from blowing up.”



“Huh? What did you say just now?”

“Nothing. Oh, that seems to be the building.”

It was a three story building in the middle of the city. It was reported as a factory. The lights were on even at this late hour.

“Did he take any hostages?”

Kang-suk wondered as he headed to XX Building. The soldiers and police waited in the darkness so that Phantom wouldn't smell them. Once the commandos leader sent a signal, they would pour into the building at lightning fast speed.

Once Kang-suk's shadow disappeared into the building, the leader gave an order on the radio.

“Enter in five minutes. Prepare your power.”

–Yes? Then Detective Cho Kang-suk...

“What did you say? I told you to be ready in five minutes.”

The commandos leader smirked.

Right now, catching Phantom was more important than the life of one detective. He stared into the darkness with greedy eyes.

---

Kang-suk never dreamt that someone he had just been talking to would stab him in the back.

Once he arrived at the entrance of XX Building, a security guard stopped him.

“This is private property. You can’t go in here.”

Kang-suk quietly showed his police badge.

“It is an emergency situation. I received a report that a criminal is hiding here.”

The security stuttered with panick at Kang-suk’s words.

“T-That, to come in here, a warrant...”

Kang-suk pulled out the handgun that was hanging from his waist.

“I said it was an emergency.”

A terrorist with bombs and firearms was hiding here. It was one of the few situations where a detective from South Korea could fire his gun.

“G-Gu...”

The frightened guard stepped back.

Kang-suk didn't hesitate to kick the iron door and break the lock before entering.

“...Phantom is underground.”

He had to hurry as much as possible. Kang-suk ran like the wind towards his destination. White-faced women screamed with confused faces, but they couldn't stop Kang-suk. In the end, Kang-suk arrived at the door in the basement where Phantom was waiting.

“First of all, I should make the gun disappear.”

He put the gun in his pocket and slowly opened the door. He spoke in a quiet voice towards the waiting opponent.

“Phantom... As promised, I've come.”

The special troops would arrive here one minute later. They would pour all their firepower towards Phantom without worrying about Kang-suk's death.

“Phantom...?”

Kang-suk realized that there was no one in the room. There was only a small table in the corner. The phantom mask was placed on top of it.

As he looked around, tremendous shouting could be heard.

“Power entry!”

Dozens of people entered the room with their muzzles facing forward.

Kang-suk’s face distorted.

“Weren’t you supposed to come at the signal?”

The commandos chief became aware that Kang-suk was alone in the room.

“Where is Phantom?”

Kang-suk quietly pointed to the table.

“He didn’t come?”

“...Maybe he caught on to the operation.”

The commandos leader threw his rifle and cursed,

“What? Was it a trick to come here? Did we fall into a trap?  
Daaaaammnnnn!”

Kang-suk spat out some dust. If the Phantom was here then Kang-suk would’ve been shot. These bastards.

The commandos leader approached the table and slammed his fist against the phantom mask.

“Kuak!”

Then he screamed. His fist smashed against something inside and blood sprayed everywhere.

“...Pff. It is a very slapstick comedy.”

Kang-suk could only think that. Kang-suk shook his head and approached the leader holding his fist.

He was still cursing Phantom.

“Are you alright?”

“Do I look okay?”

“Maybe you should call an ambulance.”

“Then you call!”

The commandos leader yelled at Kang-suk.

Kang-suk cleared the scattered pieces of the opera mask. There was a tablet with sharp edges. It was a trap designed to hurt the hands if they tried to destroy the mask without checking the content underneath.

“If that was a bomb then we would all be dead.”

Kang-suk clicked his tongue as he looked at the tablet. Once the mask blocking the light disappeared, the pre-recorded video started playing.

Phantom’s face flashed on the screen.

## Chapter 102 – Accomplice #3

---

-Hello Detective Cho Kang-suk. By the way, it seems like there are many uninvited guests.

The commandos leader wrapped a bandage around his hand and muttered,

“That son of a bitch is playing with...!”

The room only contained the recorded video, which told them one thing: Information from inside the police agency was leaking out.

“Kuook Who? What bastard?”

The commandos leader wasn't an idiot and didn't need an explanation to understand the situation.

-I'm more shy than I look. Negotiations shall proceed again from somewhere else.

“Kuooooook!”

In the end, the police and counter-terrorism team members were dancing on top of Phantom's palms. But this wasn't the end of Phantom's video.

–You’ve come a long way. I’ll be sorry if you return with empty hands, so I have prepared a small gift so I hope you like it.

“A gift?”

Kang-suk gulped as he looked at the tablet.

The message cut off there. Considering his previous experience with Phantom, the gift certainly wouldn’t be ordinary. The table contained a video file and photos.

“We just saw the video...”

“D-Detective Cho! Try not to touch Phantom’s fingerprints!”

‘You were the one who almost smashed it.’

Kang-suk barely managed to stop the words from leaving his mouth. However, Kang-suk was an experienced detective and knew how to deal with this situation.

“Yes, I will pay particular attention to what you have told me.”

Once Kang-suk pulled out leather gloves from his pocket, the leader looked dumbfounded.

“Hum hum... Yes. Do it well.”



‘Phantom leaving fingerprints behind? Impossible...’

Kang-suk smiled and checked the photo file. He was nervous about the gruesome scene of a murder, but it was actually very simple.

“The problem is very close by?”

That was the only thing written on a sheet of paper. At that moment, something popped into Kang-suk’s head. Before the operation started, he had investigated what this place was. It had obviously been reported as a factory.

“It clearly doesn’t look like that.”

He had been in a rush when he came here, so he didn’t pay that much attention. But he realized something was strange the moment he saw the memo left behind by Phantom.

Kang-suk muttered in a small voice,

“...What is this place?”

---

“You will be arrested in accordance with Article 21 Clause 1 of the Medical Law!”

“W-What? Y-You! Who, who are you?!”

“The doctors are curious about who we are?”

“If you want to go after a chicken, then you have to catch a rat!”

“Plunge in with all your strength!”

The commandos, who were standing by to catch Phantom, opened the door and entered,

“H-Hiiiiik!”

Then an unlicensed doctor wearing a doctor’s coat screamed,

“G-Gun! What? What is going on?!”

Kang-suk shook his head and clicked his tongue.

“It is like using a sword to cut off a nail. Mobilizing special forces to catch unlicensed doctors... Let’s see... No license, illegal abortions...”

“.....”

The unlicensed doctor, Jung Eui-do, still couldn't understand the situation. He didn't think the big guy in front of him was a homicide detective.

Jung Eui-do asked carefully,

“I didn't hear from the police chief of Gangseo-gu that a crackdown was coming...”

Gangseo Police Station was in charge of the area where the illegal medical center was located. There must be secret connections for it to be operating so unabashedly like this.

Kang-suk shrugged.

“I'm sorry, but it isn't a crackdown. Is there anything else?”

Jung Eui-do desperately waved his hands.

“Uh, no.”

“Is that so? Eh? By the way, what is going on here?”

Kang-suk picked up the paperwork that was rolling around on the ground and placed it on the desk. There was something here.

“Can I take a look at it for a moment?”

“Yes, yes.”

If he were arrested for unlicensed medical treatment, he would be punished with imprisonment of up to five years or a fine not exceeding 20 million won. That was just the maximum sentencing, however. Most of them were released on probation if they showed their cooperation in the investigation and bribed people. It was how a hospital for illegal medical treatment could operate so unabashedly.

In addition, there were hidden things. If they investigated more than the abortions and illegal plastic surgeries...

“Hrmm. It looks like this place is where fetuses are killed and then trafficked.

“T-T-There is no such thing.”

Jung Eui-do’s face turned white.

It was 10 years imprisonment if he was caught smuggling a processed fetus. Then what about smuggling raw materials? It could increase to double that.

Jung Eui-do said as calmly as possible,

“If you feel doubt then you can search the hospital. I really didn’t

do that.”

Fortunately, the remaining inventory in the hospital had been shipped several days before. He would never be caught...

“Is that so? However, this seems to be a picture of fetus trading.”

Kang-suk pulled out some photos from an envelope and showed them to Jung Eui-do.

“Heok...”

Jung Eui-do looked stunned.

Jung Eui-do, along with the secret warehouse where they were all caught in, was captured on photo. He had made a deal with a Chinese who crossed the ocean. This couldn't be explained.

“S-Something seems wrong. Ah, manipulation. That is photo manipulation...”

“Expert analysis will quickly reveal if this was altered or not. If you don't have anything else to say then get up.”

“D-D-Detective-nim!”

Kang-suk placed the new evidence and Phantom's gift into an

envelope and stood up.

Kang-suk had examined the table where the phantom mask was sitting and found an envelope containing evidence that illegal medical activities were being conducted here, as well as the crime of selling fetuses.

“I have to thank him for this...”

Cho Kang-suk scratched his head and sighed.

---

After teasing the commandos leader, Phantom was sitting on his bed and staring at the Demon Revealing Mirror.

[Crime Skill: Illegal Surgery has been acquired.]

-Various surgical operations can be done.

-However, treatment isn't possible.

“It is a little early, but let's just say that I am discharged.”

He wondered about the newly acquired crime skills, but there was a more urgent matter first. Tae-hyuk contacted Cho Kang-suk

using Phantom's private line and used Voice Modulation to imitate Kim Bum-soo.

“Hello Detective Cho Kang-suk.”

–P-Phantom...

“Did you like my present? My proposal is still valid. Of course, if you bring uninvited guests again, then it will be the same as today.”

–...Sorry I couldn't keep my promise.

The corners of Tae-hyuk's mouth went up.

Cho Kang-suk, a detective with a sense of justice, was apologizing to the criminal Phantom. It was a pity that he couldn't see what had happened.

“You must have suffered acting as the middle-man. Then I will give you a clue. The newly appointed police commissioner seems to want to catch me a lot. Tell the police commissioner that if he acts again this time, I will release ‘it’.”

–What does that mean?

“You don't have to know. Just pass it on.”

— .....

“The meeting point will be delivered in 12 hours. Then let’s finish this case well.”

Tae-hyuk hung up and leaned back on his pillow. The after-effects of his injuries still remained. However, he could restore his exhausted stamina with a good night of sleep. After upgrading to ‘Noble’, his body had become stronger than before.

“But it seems like the new police commissioner has really done something wrong.”

Tae-hyuk laughed.

In fact, it was a bluff when he told Kang-suk that.

“Maybe I really am a god?”

There had to be something behind him if he could sit in the position of police commissioner. Tae-hyuk was aiming at that.

“Anyway, won’t my bluff be true if he really comes alone to the next meeting place?”

If not, he would just leave a video mocking the police like this time.



In fact, the way of figuring out if Kang-suk had a tail or not was very simple. Since he copied Kang-suk's phone during the hippo case, he could listen to all of the calls. Phantom doing all contact with Kang-suk wasn't just to build up his merits. By wiretapping Kang-suk, he could see the movements of the police regarding Phantom.

“Then shall I see how rotten this police commissioner is?”

---

The new police commissioner, Chae Bum-ho, stood up after hearing the report.

“He will reveal ‘it’ that put me in the position of police commissioner? D-Don't tell me... No. It is a top secret. A mere criminal...”

Chae Bum-ho muttered with a dark expression.

“...However, Phantom was clearly involved in the dismissal of the last police commissioner. No, anybody who knows I was involved with Taesung has already...”

Phantom definitely knew something. If the incident became known, then it wouldn't end with just removing his clothes. It would be difficult to escape being branded as a criminal.

Chae Bum-ho's face distorted.

He knew the position that he was sitting in. Most police commissioners met a disastrous end. Of the past police commissioners, nine were involved in a crime, and some were still in prison. He had been careful not to step on any toes, but the criminal wearing a mask would reveal 'it'?

He couldn't just wait and see.

Chae Bum-ho licked his lips and contacted the Gangdong police superintendent.

"It is me. Tell Detective Cho Kang-suk to listen to what Phantom wants. But be sure to report it to me."

-Yes, I understand.

Chae Bum-ho hung up and muttered.

"Don't think you won, Phantom. I will surely rip your mask off."

---

-Listen to what Phantom wants.

-Then I will be going to see him alone?

-Yes. Detective Cho. The pride of the police agency is on your

shoulders. Please make a good deal with Phantom.

–I understand.

Tae-hyuk smiled widely as he listened to the conversation between Cho Kang-suk and the Gangdong police superintendent.

“That was a really simple bluff. I don’t know his face but I would like to play poker with him. I wouldn’t even need to use the Gambling skill...”

He suddenly felt a pain in his palm while muttering. Tae-hyuk frowned and looked at the wound.

“...It really can’t be treated.”

There was a cut from a box cutter knife on his palm. It had clearly been perfectly stitched with the Illegal Surgery skill. Even so, nobody seemed to notice the wound.

“Will this aggravate it? I guess I have to put a plaster on it.”

Illegal Surgery couldn’t even do first aid treatment so it felt like a useless skill. However, it had a special function.

“Operation Cancel!”

The small sign of the surgery that sutured the wound disappeared, and it returned to the original state before the procedure.

“...This could be very useful in prison.”

He rubbed some ointment on the wound, covered it in a plaster, and contacted Kang-suk. It was decided that they would meet at the meeting point right now.

‘They might have noticed that information was being leaked and planned a double trap. So we will meet here.’

Kang-suk seemed perplexed when he heard that the meeting place was L Amusement Park, but the answer came soon.

“Then I’ll see you in 45 minutes.”

–I understand.

He suggested a time that took into consideration where Kang-suk currently was. It was only enough time for him to get here.

By the time Tae-hyuk called a taxi and got to the amusement park, there were five minutes left until the agreed meeting time. Tae-hyuk bought a ticket to the Ferris wheel and changed his face to Shin Se-ho, whom he had met several times.

“It is a weekday evening, but why are there so many people?”

He couldn't help laughing. Kang-suk was meeting Phantom in a place like this. If he thought Phantom was a simple terrorist, then Kang-suk would've turned it down somehow. It meant that he intended to cooperate since they had the same purpose.

Tae-hyuk called and asked,

“Detective Cho Kang-suk. Have you arrived at the meeting point?”

-Heok... I am almost there.

“Yes. Once you arrive, buy a Ferris wheel ticket and get on the next one that arrives. Then you will be able to meet me.”

-I understand.

Tae-hyuk went to a nearby restroom and changed clothes instead of using Counterfeit. Now he looked so much like Shin Se-ho that even family members wouldn't be able to tell them apart.

‘Oh, there he is.’

When he got back to the Ferris wheel, he could see Kang-suk looking around. Tae-hyuk quietly walked over and said,

“Eh? If it isn’t Detective Cho Kang-suk.”

“Ack...”

“I don’t think you’ve come to play with your girlfriend. Was there an incident or something?”

“Ah, no.”

Despite Kang-suk’s confusion, he pretended like nothing was going on. He had to meet with Phantom and have an important talk.

Tae-hyuk said with a smile,

“Aye~ you must be hiding something. Don’t be like this. Let’s share something good together.”

“...I’m sorry but I am very busy. I have to meet someone right now.”

“Can I join you?”

“That is a little...”

Kang-suk noticed that the Ferris wheel car was coming and ran. There was no time to explain. Tae-hyuk didn’t miss it and followed

along. In the end, Kang-suk cried out,

“H-How did you get in? Please leave immediately.”

“Detective Cho Kang-suk. Who are you going to meet here?”

“I can’t tell you that. I’m sorry but I really can’t. You can make a formal protest to the police station.”

“Nope. You are right, Detective Cho Kang-suk. Weren’t you supposed to meet someone?”

Kang-suk’s body stiffened. Now he remembered that Shin Se-ho shouldn’t be here. He was captured by a killer and was currently stuck in the hospital...

Kang-suk gulped and looked at the man in front of him.

“You, who are you?”

“The man that Detective-nim has been waiting for. Then let’s start the deal.”

Kang-suk stared at the other person.

“P-Phantom? But no matter how I look, you are Shin Se-ho...”

“Is this enough to make you believe?”

Tae-hyuk took the phantom mask from his pocket and placed it on his face. After a while, he took it off to reveal Cho Kang-suk's face.

“H-Heok!”

“It is a joke. Then let's start the negotiations.”

Rattle rattle.

Once all the passengers boarded, the Ferris Wheel started operating. It would take five minutes to go around once.

Everything had to be finished during that time.



## Chapter 103 – Accomplice #4

---

The darkness of the city could be seen as the Ferris Wheel turned slowly towards the sky. Kang-suk and Phantom didn't talk for a minute after its departure.

The first one to open his mouth was Kang-suk.

“I'm sorry, but could you not have that face?”

Phantom was still wearing Kang-suk's face. If they talked like this, then it felt like he was talking into a mirror.

“Don't you like looking at your face?”

“It's not that, it is a little annoying.”

All humans felt an instinctive displeasure when seeing a person with the same face as them. It felt like he was meeting a doppelganger. Kang-suk didn't have much interest in psychology. However, he felt goose bumps when he saw his face smiling in front of him.

The psychological term that expressed this... He had to search it up later. It was hard to talk, let alone negotiate.

Phantom laughed. It was the first time Kang-suk realized that his face could smile like that.

“Then I will do what you want.”

“Yes, that would be appreciated.”

Phantom put on the mask and then took it off again. Shin Se-ho’s face appeared once again.

“Detective Cho Kang-suk. Are you comfortable now?”

“I don’t like his face but this is better. By the way, what do you originally look like?”

“I’m sorry, but I sometimes have to hide my identity to infiltrate the enemy. I can’t show you my face without a disguise.”

It wasn’t simply the face. Everything, from the tone of his voice, to his speaking method seemed to be Shin Se-ho. Kang-suk wondered about the body, but Phantom was wearing a thick trench coat.

“Hrmm. Is that special makeup?”

“I’ll just say that it is something similar. By the way, you sound gentler. Didn’t you sound angry whenever I called you on the phone?”

“I think you are very selfish.”

A variety of expressions crossed Kang-suk's face. The person in front of him was a dangerous criminal that couldn't be compared to a neighbourhood gang. Even if cooperation was necessary for the investigation, that fact remained unchanged.

“You are so dynamic that I want to tease you all day.”

“Stop the nonsense and get to the main point.”

“Yes. Now we will talk about the case that is giving Detective-nim a headache.”

“.....”

“I think I can help you. How about it?”

Kang-suk stared at Phantom silently. He wondered how much Phantom knew about Park Sung-yul, so he decided to try it.

“What are you helping me with?”

Phantom's eyes went gentle. The answer that he received was far beyond Kang-suk's expectations.

“You want someone to sneak into Blue Dragon Prison and look for information on Park Sung-yul. If some of the conditions are met then I can help you.”

“...You know a lot. How can you give a clear answer when I haven’t even asked the question yet?”

“Maybe somebody gave me information.”

“An informant.”

Of course, it was a lie. Phantom completely hid the fact that he wire-tapped Kang-suk by creating a fictional person.

“I don’t think it’s a bad deal for the police. Of course, after everything is done, I must be able to leave properly.”

Phantom laughed,

“Of course.”

“Well, if I was kept in there then I might lead some of the other prisoners on a jailbreak. Let’s see. If I team up with the Bomber to escape, then the journalists won’t have to worry about working for a week.”

Kang-suk’s body trembled. Just thinking about that threat was terrifying.

“Then let me ask you one thing. You aren’t a police officer... What do you get for helping me?”

Sometimes he did something horrific for a good reason. Kang-suk suddenly wondered why Phantom came out like this.

“It is indeed money. Let’s see. There is no bounty on a hidden crime. I am looking for the guilt of a man trapped in prison. I am fine with receiving 30 million.”

“I see. But I think you can make money through easier methods.”

“I am an irregular worker. I am very envious of the office workers with a regular salary.”

“Haha... At any rate, I will be sure to contact you at the end of the case.”

“I’m not worried.”

Phantom and Kang-suk briefly talked about the prison. In the meantime, the Ferris Wheel was about to complete one turn.

“Then are we accomplices?”

“We have gathered strengths to solve this case so it isn’t wrong to say that.”

“Then it was nice to meet you, Detective Cho Kang-suk.”

“You as well, Phantom.”

Phantom extended a hand covered by a thick glove.

“I’m sorry but my right hand is a bit hurt right now, so please bear with my left hand. Ah right, I am working with Cho Kang-suk, not the police.”

Kang-suk shook hands with Phantom without saying anything. Thus, the alliance between Phantom and Detective Cho Kang-suk formed.

---

The alliance with Phantom was established but the police were quiet. Kang-suk apparently thought that there was some type of deal between the police commissioner and Phantom.

“He said to hide as much as possible that Phantom is involved in this case?”

Kang-suk was about to make contact with the prison warden, which was the last preparation stage.

“He said that he would use the pseudonym Kim Cheol-su.”

On the table was Phantom’s fake ID made by the General Affairs

Department. Ironically, even a family registration was needed to go to prison. He couldn't go in with the name Phantom, so he needed a fake identity.

Inside the envelope was a resident registration card, a passport, and a driver's license. But the photo shot was literally art.

Kang-suk lost his appetite looking at it.

The person was in their mid-40s, and displayed a half-shaved head covered in oil. Deep wrinkles were seen on the face. In particular, the reddish eyes looked dangerous. It was almost like he was on a drug. Even so, the beard was neatly shaved with a razor blade. The atmosphere that he gave off would make any weak person crack. It felt like the face of a crazy person was painted.

He was photographed with an old shirt and a blue jacket. The quality was so good that Kang-suk could distribute many flyers right now.

“This is enough to seem like a criminal...”

This was the appearance of ‘Kim Cheol-su’ that Phantom would use in the prison from now on.

“Is he the person who will enter Blue Dragon Prison?”

Joo Hyun-ho opened the door and entered. This mission was strictly confidential, so he didn't tell Hyun-ho that Kim Cheol-su's

identity was Phantom.

“Uh, that’s right.”

Hyun-ho looked at the photo on the ID and muttered.

“Wow, totally perfect. What type of person is he? He looks like he could kill 15 people while laughing. If you knew such a person then you should’ve told me in advance. There was no need to waste time on Phantom.”

“I didn’t realize that I knew such a person.”

“He gets 30 million won as compensation, although he certainly deserves that much for entering Blue Dragon. Of course, one billion would be given if needed.”

“We were lucky.”

Kang-suk barely managed to keep his mouth shut. Was this what a hat seller felt like when they discovered that the king’s ears were strange?

“Be quiet. I have to call the warden.”

“Yes.”



He had sought cooperation from the warden beforehand. Now, if Kim Cheol-su's details passed, a new prisoner would enter Blue Dragon.

Kang-suk called the number of the prison stored in his phone. Then a gentle voice welcomed Kang-suk.

–Detective Cho Kang-suk, is the criminal prepared?

“Yes, I will send you the relevant materials through fax right now.”

–Let's see... Wah. Isn't this person really a criminal?

“...I'm sorry but he is an investigator. I had to find someone who is unknown to as many criminals as possible.”

–With that face, he will fit in perfectly. At any rate, I will pay attention to Kim Cheol-su. I am the only one who knows that he is an undercover investigator.

“I understand. The more people who know, the more likely discovery will be.”

–So I will keep it a secret, even if he is treated a little harshly by the prison guards. You should know. The prisoners confined here usually aren't human. A little roughness is needed to deal with these people. It is the only condition of my cooperation.

“Yes, then Kim Cheol-su will arrive in three days.”

–I hope this turns out well, Detective Cho Kang-suk.

The phone call ended there. The prison warden definitely seemed to be hiding something, but it was impossible to know unless he went directly there. Kang-suk muttered so that Joo Hyun-ho, sitting next to him, couldn't hear anything.

“In the end, everyone involved in this operation is deceiving someone.”

He lost his appetite.

Everything was in order to dig out the tragedy caused by Park Sung-yul. However, the case wouldn't end that simply.

Three days later, the stage was moved to the Blue Dragon Prison. Now Kang-suk had to wait for Phantom to safely get the information from Park Sung-yul.

“In the end, Phantom is the only one who can tell the truth about this case. He is literally an accomplice.”

Kang-suk closed his eyes and leaned back in his chair.

---

“The warden seems to be hiding something; you should be careful.”

Kang-suk and Phantom were riding the convoy heading to Blue Dragon Prison.

Once they arrived at the port, they would ride on the boat for 30 minutes before arriving at Blue Dragon Prison. Rather than the handcuffed Phantom, Kang-suk was the one that seemed more nervous.

“Don’t worry. I am Kim Cheol-su. I don’t care if it is Blue Dragon or Red Pheonix, no prison can hold me.”

The tone was a completely different person to Phantom. The more he watched, the stranger it was.

“The guards don’t know that you are a co-worker. They just think you are a criminal who has committed terrible acts. It will be hard for you to endure.”

Phantom laughed.

Endure? He had lived there for 10 years. If he closed his eyes, the appearance of Blue Dragon Prison still vividly popped up. The time limit was one month. At that time, he had an appointment with the warden to get him out of prison.

“Detective Cho Kang-suk, we’ve arrived.”

Salty wind blew through the iron bars covering the window of the back door. They were at the port where a ship would transport them to Blue Dragon Prison. The moment he got there, he would be a prisoner completely disconnected from the world.

Phantom licked his lips and recalled the prison that was beyond the horizon.

First of all, it was important to find the gold left behind by the Japanese army. However, it was surprisingly enjoyable to solve the puzzle made by Park Sung-yul.

‘Past events have already happened. How many puzzles can I solve based on the ending that I know?’

Phantom smiled and looked at his accomplice.

“Then let’s go.”

# Chapter 104 – Pieces Of The Puzzle #1

---

There was a newcomer arriving on a boat.

The prisoners doing their exercises started to talk with a shine in their eyes.

“It seems like a Korean is entering.”

“I hope he is a Chinese.”

The reason why they were keen on getting a newcomer was simple. Depending on the nationality, the power structure inside the prison would change.

Blue Dragon was unusual in that it was a foreign correctional facility as well. Foreign inmates were confined by nationality and religion. Of course, the Korean criminals were the most abundant, but the ratio of foreigners had begun to increase lately.

Here, there was power in numbers. There were no idiots that would face off against a larger force.

“I saw the latest news that a Chinese killer was caught. Surely he isn’t that bastard?”

“I thought he died.”

“No. Caught.”

“Really?”

“Fuck, we shouldn’t have any more Chinese...”

Since a few years ago, the number of Chinese criminals started to increase tremendously. Most were death penalty cases, making it hard to send them back to their homeland. So the number of Chinese inmates in Blue Dragon Prison grew steadily.

But if a new Chinese killer entered? The power structure inside the prison could completely reverse.

One criminal with exceptional eyesight raised his hand.

“The newbie is entering!”

The eyes of the criminals turned towards the barbed wire near the port.

“Doesn’t it seem to be just one person? Uh, isn’t that the warden?”

“...Does that mean he is big enough for the warden himself to go collect him? Maybe it really is that killer...”

The criminal in charge of cleaning the inside of the prison said,

“I was working near the General Affairs Department yesterday and heard something. The person entering today is Korean.”

There were sighs of relief from the people who were in opposition to the Chinese.

One of the guards, keeping an eye on the criminals in the area, yelled,

“Is this a zoo? Don’t crowd around. If there is one more problem then there won’t be exercise time this week.”

“Yes~”

The gathered prisoners answered before scattering, but their eyes were still following the newbie. In the end, they were able to see the newbie going through the entrance with a detective.

Someone muttered,

“I don’t want to say this, but he looks like a fucked-up bastard.”

The prisoners listening nodded in agreement.

---

Tae-hyuk and Kang-suk arrived at Blue Dragon Prison and were talking to the warden.

The warden emphasized it again.

“I will tell you a few times, but you have to be very careful. There are many dangerous people in this prison. If they find out that you are an investigator who infiltrated in order to get information, your life will be in danger.”

Tae-hyuk laughed.

“Don’t worry about it.”

He looked relaxed like he was returning to his home.

The warden said in an impressed voice,

“You are really an investigator right? You seem to be very used to a place like this. I’ve seen a lot of investigators who infiltrated here. It is the first time I’ve seen one like Kim Cheol-su.”

He looked like a criminal hiding his identity.

Kang-suk interrupted the conversation between Tae-hyuk and the warden. There wasn’t much time left until the transport departed.



“Warden-nim, I’ll go first. Thank you for doing me this favor.”

“Thank you for coming such a long way. Then the guard will guide you out.”

Kang-suk handed over the documents he brought to the warden and whispered to Tae-hyuk.

“Then I wish you luck.”

Tae-hyuk just smiled instead of answering. In the end, Kang-suk left and there were only two people remaining in the room.

The first one to open his mouth was the warden.

“Cheol-su. Welcome to Blue Dragon Prison. I couldn’t tell you properly while the detective was here. There are a few things I would like to ask you.”

“Do it.”

At that moment, the eyes of the warden shook,

“Aren’t you overacting this? We are the only ones here.”

“Acting? I am originally like this.”

The warden felt the breath clogging in his throat. He didn't know where Cho Kang-suk found Kim Cheol-su, but he really seemed like a criminal. It seemed like the warden wouldn't have to worry about him.

“Cough. I understand. You'll be put in straight away so don't relax. By the way, I didn't tell you when Detective Cho Kang-suk was here, but you should be careful.”

The warden didn't like the man called Kim Cheol-su in front of him, so the warden decided to scare him a little bit.

“Be careful?”

“Yes. All the prisoners here are bad guys. Don't forget that you will never be safe as a spy planted by the police. Ah, don't you already know up to here? But so far, all the spies planted here have been killed or disfigured. Cheol-su is only protected during the day. At night, you'll have to hold out alone among the beasts.”

There was a smile of satisfaction as the warden finished his story and looked at the other person. He thought this would be a suitable warning.

“Warden-nim doesn't need to worry about me.”

“C-Cough! Cheol-su. As warden, I can't take care of you. Here I am the law. Even if you don't know that now, you will soon find out. Then I hope you stay safe.”

Tae-hyuk laughed as he watched the warden's face reddening. Unfortunately, this level of provocation wasn't enough to faze him at all.

“Stop chatting and get to the bottom line.”

“Shall I put you in Park Sung-yul's sally? Ah, this prison is American style so I used words that aren't common. Sally is...”

“It is referring to the same room mate. I know that much.”

“Oh, you must've studied a lot beforehand. There are only one or two people per room. It is different from other prisons, where people are gathered together.”

Tae-hyuk felt like he had come home after entering this prison.

“Put me in with Yoo Cheol-ho.”

The warden's eyes widened with surprise as Yoo Cheol-ho's name came out of Tae-hyuk's mouth.

“Y-Yoo Cheol-ho?”

“Yes.”

“His room is empty. Can I hear why? Didn’t you come to get information from Park Sung-yul?”

Tae-hyuk looked at the warden with a disbelieving expression.

“He will be suspicious if a guy, who is suddenly roomed with him, is asking him questions. Rather, it is better to get information from the people around Park Sung-yul.”

“Ah...”

The warden nodded. He had thought that Cheol-su was just a brat, but he seemed surprisingly good at spying. The warden called the guards and ordered them to put Kim Cheol-su as Yoo Cheol-ho’s cellmate.

“Oh, keep this in mind. Don’t get involved with foreign inmates. Anyway, isn’t it enough to get information from the Koreans?”

“I will take that into account if possible.”

“It is Kim Cheol-su’s life at risk. Please be careful.”

After waiting a while, a patrol agent in blue clothing came into the room. He looked straight at Tae-hyuk and said,

“Come this way.”

Tae-hyuk followed the guard and muttered,

“But don’t you want to do more?”

---

There were many foreign residents in Blue Dragon Prison. Most of them were in a hostile relationship with each other, so several doors with bars on them had to be crossed to enter another area. Breaking through the barrier was necessary to get what he wanted.

Before entering the prison, the guard stripped Tae-hyuk of his clothes. It was because there was a chance he was concealing something like a weapon in a secret place.

“Um. There is nothing. By the way, your body is quite small compared to the size of your head. Huhu... Then you can wear these clothes here. Your clothes will be put in a box and kept in the storage room. You will receive them again then they are released. Any questions?”

Tae-hyuk shook his head without saying anything and put on the clothes that inmates wore. Now he was a perfect member of Blue Dragon Prison.

Once he was ready, the guard took Tae-hyuk to a general cell. It was the A-1 zone that had the most inmates.

“Number 1047, this is where you will live starting from today.”

Tae-hyuk was wearing a nametag with a number on it. Starting today, it would be Tae-hyuk's default title. The guard went into the deepest part of the cell and knocked on the iron door with a grate.

"Number 747. Have you been bored due to being alone? A roommate has come.'

There was a sink and toilet, a small table, and bunk bed where two men could sleep. Inmates spent more than half the day in the cells.

"Number 747...! Hey, Yoo Cheol-ho!"

"....."

There was a bump on the bed where someone was lying.

However, the guard didn't hesitate to call out. In the end, the guard opened the door with a key and entered.

"Hey, you son of a bitch. You must be crazy."

The guard pulled out the club he was wearing at his waist and tried to hit Yoo Cheol-ho. At that moment, Yoo Cheol-ho stretched out his hand from the futon and grabbed the guard's arm.

“This bastard...!”

Next, the face popped out.

“Huhu. Guard-nim. I’m not feeling well. Check with the doctor.”

“Fuck, then say that! And how long will you hold my arm? Do you want to go to hell?”

“Aigoo, I’m sorry. I unconsciously did it.”

“Leave it.”

“I will.”

Yoo Cheol-ho smirked and released the hand holding the guard’s arm. The guard gestured to Tae-hyuk to come in.

“Number 747. Take care of this newbie. Don’t tell him anything strange.”

“I understand. Huhu.”

Yoo Cheol-ho grinned and sat up on the bed.

“Ah, unlucky child.”

The guard spat at the entrance before closing the cell door and disappearing somewhere. Only Tae-hyuk and Yoo Cheol-ho remained in the room. Yoo Cheol-ho smacked his lips like a person deprived of snacks and said,

“The guards here are very tough. They are so cute that I am going crazy. Hey Newbie, do you know who I am?”

“Well, I don’t know very well.”

“Ohuhu... Your face looks like you’ve eaten a lot of boiled rice. In any case, don’t ask for age here. All prisoners are the same. Looking at your face, you were in a different prison for a while.”

Tae-hyuk shrugged instead of answering.

“This is a special prison for heinous criminals like me, so the guards are very rough. If there is even the smallest gap then they will try to half kill a person. Huhu... But you know what? No matter how strong someone pretends to be, they are fresh and white once they take off their clothes. Tearing that to shreds...”

Tae-hyuk smiled and summoned the iron pipe with the Violence skill. Then he struck Yoo Cheol-ho’s head.

“Kuheok...”



Yoo Cheol-ho's eyes rolled into the back of his head and he lost consciousness.

“You talk too much.”

Tae-hyuk carefully covered Yoo Cheol-ho with a bedspread.

“Keep occupying this bed. You have a cold.”

He had entered Yoo Cheol-ho's room as planned. He told the warden that it was to investigate the people around Park Sung-yul. However, Tae-hyuk's purpose was something else.

“Let's see how the mole dug his tunnel.”

Tae-hyuk laughed as he looked at Yoo Cheol-ho.

He was a criminal who had already successfully escaped from prison. After becoming aware of his future memories, the first thing Tae-hyuk did was catch Yoo Cheol-ho. It was a really old bond.

Yoo Cheol-ho was trapped in this place, that was several kilometres away from land, so that he wouldn't try to escape again. However, Yoo Cheol-ho once again succeeded in breaking out. He gained the nickname the 'King of Escape' after that. Tae-hyuk knew the method that Yoo Cheol-ho used for his second escape.

‘If I want to find the gold, I need to be able to roam around the prison freely. To do that, I need the tunnel created by Yoo Cheol-ho.’

Tae-hyuk used Spying to identify nearby features.

‘There really is a tunnel. I’d like to draw a picture of it.’

However, he had no paper or pen. Yoo Cheol-ho’s escape started behind the sink. He needed a few things in order to use it.

“First, I need to put a drug in Yoo Cheol-ho’s cup...”

He couldn’t make Yoo Cheol-ho unconscious every time with the iron pipe. However, he didn’t plan to escape from jail with Yoo Cheol-ho. Tae-hyuk brought everything he could use inside the prison. Of course, a small tool was needed to get them out.

“You didn’t think I would bring it in this way, did you?”

Tae-hyuk laughed as he recalled the guard who body-searched him. The guard could never find the hidden things. Tae-hyuk stared at his bulging body and touched something firm.

“I brought it inside my body.”

## Chapter 105 – Pieces Of The Puzzle #2

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Illegal Surgery was a skill that could do any type of surgery, given that he had the tools. However, even if a wound was treated with Illegal Surgery, it wouldn't be treated at all. At first glance, it seemed like a total useless ability. However, the true value of Illegal Surgery lied in the 'Cancel' ability that restored the area to its original state.

He was able to use it when he acquired the skill. Well, it was an ability that was automatically learned when he became a Noble, just like 'Damage to Both Sides'.

Tae-hyuk rolled up his shirt and looked at his belly. An incision was made, and a plastic pack used for surgery was inserted inside. He then used Cancel, and as if time had turned backwards, his belly returned to its original state.

'I put a lot of medicines and things I need for the future inside the pack. If it was a bomb...'

It was a skill that could make a literal walking bomb. That wasn't the only scary thing about Illegal Surgery. The results of all surgeries were cancelled. It was the same with amputation.

He cut off his toe and triggered Cancel. Then an amazing thing happened in front of him, just like watching a movie. The toe he placed on his desk returned to its original place. The only thing was that Cancel could only be used up to 60 minutes after a surgery was done.

‘Cutting my neck is impossible, but I can cut off my arms or legs.’

It was a bizarre skill that allowed him to freely do things with the human body.

‘First, I have to take this out.’

Due to having something foreign in his body, it felt like he had indigestion. He wanted to get rid of it as soon as possible. In order to perform an incision, he needed tools such as a scalpel, tweezers, and a clamp.

However, Tae-hyuk had the Illegal Surgery skill. It was possible to cut it with something like a kitchen knife or scissors.

‘But the problem is that this is a prison, not the outside world. There is no such thing available.’

It was natural that prisoners would be restricted in handling anything that could be used as a weapon. It was the same with utensils like forks or chopsticks. Chopsticks sharpened using bricks could be used to hurt someone. For the same reason, pages from a notebook or shoelaces from shoes were removed.

But could he cut his belly with cutlery? It wasn’t an easy task.

Tae-hyuk had lived here for 10 years, so he knew more about the

Blue Dragon's environment than the guards.

‘First, I need a worker.’

Worker referred to a person who took a job in prison. Usually they were model prisoners or people who gave bribes to the guards. Tae-hyuk knew very well how to get close to one.

As he checked the wall clock, he saw that it was almost time for dinner. It was the first time he would meet the prisoners here. It was also a testing place for every newbie.

Beep!

The signal sounded and the firmly closed door opened. A guard with a rod entered and said,

“Numbers 1047 and 747, it is time for your meal. Gather in the dining room.”

“.....”

Tae-hyuk nodded without saying anything.

“Hey Newbie. Huhu. Did you learn many things from this friend?”

“I think I learned very thoroughly.”

“Kukuk! Don’t be too scared. This is a place where people live.”

Tae-hyuk inwardly smiled. Unlike the warden, whom he provoked, he had to see the guards every day. Therefore, his answers would be as close to what they wanted as possible. He was able to look like a moderately frightened newbie.

The guard looked at Yoo Cheol-ho lying on the bed. He poked Yoo Cheol-ho with his rod and said,

“Hey, it is time to eat. Stand up.”

“.....”

Yoo Cheol-ho was lying quietly without any movements. He was stunned due to being hit by an iron pipe. It would be hard for him to get up. However, the guard didn’t know this and screamed.

“Get up!”

“.....”

“This bastard is completely crazy!”

The guard tried to pull back the blanket covering Yoo Cheol-ho.

Then Tae-hyuk said quietly,

“He told the other guard but I don’t think his body is that good. I think he received a doctor’s diagnosis to sleep for the rest of the day.”

“Really? Say that sooner you brat.”

The guard looked at Yoo Cheol-ho’s body with an annoyed expression before leaving the cell. Then he raised his hand.

“Follow me.”

“Yes.”

Most of the violent incidents in Blue Dragon Prison mainly took place in the dining room. It was one of the few times that criminals of all nationalities gathered in the same space. The rule of don’t touch other animals when eating didn’t apply here.

Tae-hyuk muttered in a small voice so that the guard walking in front of him couldn’t hear.

“Then let’s try the best way.”

---

The eyes of the prisoners eating at the tables shone as they saw

the newcomer.

“Hey, Newbie. Why is your face rotten?”

“I don’t think I’ve seen you on the 9 o’clock news. What did you get caught for?”

“Did the kid bring a little spoon? If not, he will have to eat by hand. Kilkil.”

“Don’t tease. Don’t you remember how the newcomer last week was so frightened that he urinated himself?”

“Aish, that should happen with that face.”

Tae-hyuk ignored the other prisoners teasing him and went to the rationing area. Sarcastic remarks like these were already tedious. If he reacted, then it would just become more severe.

As he walked forward with a plastic plate, a staff member wearing a hygiene mask gave him rice and various side dishes. Although it was the principle of quantitative food distribution, it was normally done at the discretion of the staff worker.

This was one of the reasons why prisoners wanted to become a worker. Tae-hyuk looked at the pancake and soup that he saw. He watched the other prisoners receive the best food for a minute.



Then the worker passed him a note under the tray. It was so natural that he had obviously done it a lot. However, he couldn't deceive Tae-hyuk's Gambling skill that was well-versed in many tricks.

‘It seems like this guy is in charge of trading.’

Tae-hyuk spoke in a small voice so that only the worker could hear.

“I want to buy it.”

Tae-hyuk made a gesture like he was holding a cigarette and paused. The worker knew what it meant and smiled,

“Are you a newbie entering today? If you can't suppress yourself now, what will happen in the future?”

“It isn't what you think. Please sell it to me.”

“Of course, if you have money then I will sell it at any time. However, it is a bit expensive because this is an island.”

Tae-hyuk remembered that the price of cigarettes was around 20,000 won. If he thought about how it could be purchased for 5,000 won at a convenience store, it was an exorbitant price.

“How much?”

“100,000 won for one pack.”

“That sounds a bit expensive.”

“Don’t buy it if you don’t want to.”

If he bargained here, then he could cut the price in half. However, Tae-hyuk needed to get what he wanted.

“Then I will buy 20 packs.”

“Wow, that is a lot.”

The worker gave a small whistle. Most of the prisoners here were criminals who committed terrible crimes. Unlike other prisons, there were few scammers or people who committed economic crimes. But buying 20 packs of cigarettes for 100,000 won? It was probably the first financier in a long time.

The stiff face of the worker relaxed and he gave a friendly smile.

“You are a newcomer so I’ll let you know how we handle trades.”

“There is no need as I’ll pay in advance.”

Tae-hyuk pulled an envelope from his sleeve and extended it

under the tray. Criminals in prison were allowed a certain amount of money. It was up to two million won. After that, they could receive one million at a time through mail or money transfer. With that money, it was possible to buy things like snacks from the prison kiosk.

“The amount should be right. Please check it so I can receive the goods as soon as possible.”

“Huhu, understood. It will be ready soon.”

Even a prison on a remote island wasn't completely disconnected from the outside. Many vendors brought in foodstuffs and there were goods sold at kiosks. It was probably the best thing for the workers here.

The workers would bribe the contractors in order to bring some things into the prison. It was mainly cigarettes, but sometimes there were psychotropic medicines and cutlery being smuggled in. Of course, the higher the risk, the more expensive it was. A newbie would be able to buy cigarettes, but it would take longer for anything else.

‘Of course, they aren't necessary. I'll obtain everything with just cigarettes.’

Tae-hyuk smiled and bowed slightly.

There were many people here who couldn't buy cigarettes

because they had no money. If he gave them one pack then they would kill for him. The rumour that there was a person who bought a huge amount of cigarettes spread quickly.

Tae-hyuk looked at his plate. The menu of the day was miso soup, stir fried anchovies, radish kimchi, and soy sauce beef. It wasn't bad because there was meat.

Was it because Tae-hyuk bought 20 packs of cigarettes? There were two big lumps of meat on his plate.

He took it and sat in a vacant seat. A hulking person who looked like he did martial arts sat across Tae-hyuk.

“Hey Newbie. Do you know that you are famous?”

“Is that right?”

“.....”

The hulking person had nothing to say as Tae-hyuk smiled and picked up his spoon.

“I guess you are still used to homemade food. You should be glad that you were given decent food.”

Tae-hyuk said nothing before grabbing the oversize fist. Then the opponent's face distorted.

“K-Kuong. W-Why is this bastard so strong?”

“Next time, it will be your crotch instead of your hand.”

“...Kuong, let go.”

He drew the attention of the other prisoners around. Then someone deliberately poured a plate containing hot soup towards Tae-hyuk, which would literally burn the face.

‘They aren’t kids. If you want to harass me then you should do it right.’

Tae-hyuk laughed and grabbed the collar of the big guy sitting near him. Then the big guy sat in Tae-hyuk’s spot. It was a superhuman move that was only possible due to his agility.

“A-Ack! Hot, hotttt!”

Instead of Tae-hyuk, the big person was the one hit by the miso soup.

“What are you doing?”

The guards watching from the entrance of the dining room cried out. The other prisoner explained,

“I’m sorry. My leg caught on the chair and I accidentally poured my soup as I slipped.”

“Take him to the infirmary right now! Don’t cause any more problems for me today. Che!”

The big guy walked out with a face covered in a cold towel. However, he didn’t forget to curse Tae-hyuk.

“It looks like you have a bit of strength. I’ll let you know who is in charge here. Just wait.”

This wasn’t the end of the newcomer’s welcome.

“Eat some rice and soybeans.”

“What did you do?”

10 prisoners surrounded Tae-hyuk like he was a novelty toy. It would be difficult to expect the help of the guards if anything happened. Once Tae-hyuk saw the people gathered, he realized it was time for him to lay down his cards.

“You don’t have any money?”

“What? What is this dog?”

“Do you want some cigarettes?”

The criminals gulped since they knew that Tae-hyuk had bought 20 packs of cigarettes. However, they couldn't bend to a newcomer.

Tae-hyuk smiled as he noticed everyone watching him. There was no big person among here. At most, they were 'Commoners', those with a sentence that was shorter than three years. It was easy to take care of those types of people.

“If you do me a favor then I'll give you a cigarette.”

“...What?”

“It is simple. I'm too bored in here. You can get a cigarette if you tell me one of the funny stories that happens here. Isn't it a good deal?”

He could hear gulps from around him. However, there were prisoners who still had their pride even with no money.

“Hey Newbie. Are you crazy? Do you think we are beggars? If you keep talking like that then I'll make you eat glass powder.”

Tae-hyuk inwardly smiled.

Glass powder. When finely ground and put into food, the stomach would become a mess, and the person would bleed out and die. However, it wasn't easy to find glass in this place. It was even more so for those who didn't even have the money to buy cigarettes.

'In my 10 years of staying here, I've only seen three people die from powdered glass.'

"Really? Then how about one story per pack? You don't have to if you don't want it.

".....!"

The eyes of the complaining prisoner changed. Tae-hyuk felt like he would be the first one to come and see Tae-hyuk.

First of all, the cigarettes. They were the beginning of his plan.



## Chapter 106 – Pieces Of The Puzzle #3

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It took no more than three days for Tae-hyuk to become famous among the Korean inmates. Today, he was drinking coffee with a prisoner who was as thin as an anchovy while listening to a hidden story of Blue Dragon.

“Saturday is the day when you should be most careful. The guards’ nerves are tight since they are on duty on the weekend.”

“I see. Please tell me more about the nature of the guards.”

“I understand. Guard Kim Chang-su... Ah, he is the smiling one who always smooths back his balding hair.

“I know who he is.”

“He is particularly sensitive about the hygiene inside the cell, so it is good to be careful about cleanliness when he is on duty.”

“Hoh. Really?”

No information was too trivial. As Tae-hyuk showed interest, Anchovy became more excited and started telling more stories. He heard a married guard talking on the phone, etc. He told Tae-hyuk all sorts of trivial matters regarding the prison guards.

After hearing all of Anchovy’s stories, Tae-hyuk made a simple

evaluation.

“I’d prefer a bit more detail.”

“Don’t you like it? Still, can I have some settlement?”

Anchovy smiled and rubbed his palms together. Tae-hyuk pulled out a pack of cigarettes from his pocket.

“Oh, isn’t this foreign tobacco?”

Most of the cigarettes circulating Blue Dragon Prison were paper cigarettes, which were made with thin paper and domestic tobacco. There was no taste and the cigarette was so compressed that it felt like one was sucking poison. However, the volume was small so not much could be smuggled. It became harder to get, so other methods were used to increase the quantity.

The cigarettes would be mixed with tea leaves at the kiosks. At the beginning of admission, the ratio was 1:1. However, as smuggling became harder, the ratio of tobacco decreased. Recently, they were able to produce 10 cigarettes from one. Of course, it didn’t have any taste, but it was better than nothing.

After a long time, it was possible to smoke a cigarette.

“Do you smoke that fake cigarette? It is like putting steak into a blender and turning it into porridge. Like dog food.”

Despite his words, Anchovy reached out towards Tae-hyuk's cigarette. Tae-hyuk hit the back of Anchovy's hand.

"I can't you one pack just on your previous stories."

"Sheesh..."

He slowly pulled out a cigarette from the pack and placed it in Anchovy's hand. Joy filled Anchovy's eyes as the cigarettes piled up on his palm. In the end, seven cigarettes were given to Anchovy. He brought a cigarette to his nose and sniffed.

He pulled a battery from his pocket. In the prison, matches and lighters were forbidden. They had to use a battery in order to light a fire.

"It is necessary to use tricks to light a fire."

Anchovy extended the spring of a ballpoint pen and connected it to the anode of the battery. It started to generate heat. He carefully brought the end of the cigarette to the spring and sucked in several times. Smoke rose and the cigarette caught on fire.

"Hah... That is fantastic. Cheol-su. Can't you give me one more?"

"If you tell me a fun story then I will give you a lot."

“.....”

Anchovy groaned because he had run out of things.

Tae-hyuk realized that the fish had started to bite the bait.

‘In the beginning, I would give a pack for minor things. However, I’ve gradually reduced the amount to 10 cigarettes for most stories. Then what will happen?’

The answer was to tell a secret story that couldn’t be told to outsiders. Even if they felt reluctant at first, they couldn’t endure the sweet temptation of foreign cigarettes.

“Don’t worry. I’ll won’t tell anyone else what you told me.”

These words ended the indecision. Anchovy started to tell an even more secret story.

“...These days, the attitude of those Japanese bastards seem strange. They seem to be hiding something. They are always confident because they have connections to Japan’s Yakuza and they smoke too much. So, there are a lot of people who look at them badly... It exploded a few days ago and an incident occurred.”

The trigger was trivial.

A Japanese prisoner eating in the dining room was accidentally

hit by the plate of a Korean. As a result, the kimchi soup covered the clothes of the prisoner.

“...Rather than apologizing, he provoked the Japanese bastard by saying that his clothes were beautifully dyed red like blood. In the end, other people gathered to fight. However, it was all the Koreans who ended up in solitary confinement.”

Tae-hyuk's eyes shone. It felt like he had found a piece of the puzzle. Japanese criminals were associated with the Yakuza, and the guards gave them privileges.

‘If I find one more piece, I think I will complete something big.’

First, he decided to be satisfied with this much.

“But the person who was taken was the leader of the Koreans, Shin Chang-ho. In the end, he couldn't bear it and is preparing for war with those Japanese bastards.”

War...!

Those trapped in confined spaces like prisons couldn't relieve their stress or overcome their dark feelings. It wasn't uncommon for fights to occur between prisoners or for them to riot against the guards, especially in Blue Dragon Prison, where all the terrible criminals were gathered. Tae-hyuk remembered that big and small rebellions took place every year in the 10 years he was here.

‘It is almost like an annual event.’

“Shin Chang-ho. It was a very pleasant story.”

Tae-hyuk handed a whole pack of cigarettes to Anchovy.

“Cheol-su, thank you.”

“Come again if you have more interesting stories.”

“Yep!”

Anchovy disappeared with the cigarettes like a miner who struck gold.

“Little by little, the pieces will fall.”

In no time, his 20 packs of cigarettes had almost run out. It was time for a restock.

---

“Fuck, I’m not a goat! Why is there only grass!”

“You are on a diet. If you don’t let it then don’t eat.”

“Ah, that’s not it. This is fine.”

The worker in charge of the food was arguing with a big person. The big person was grumbling about the distribution of the food.

“Sheesh, he could spare a chicken leg.”

Tae-hyuk, who was waiting for his turn, approached the worker and said,

“I need more cigarettes.”

“Already? How bad is your habit to go through 20 packs?”

“Are you selling? Or not selling?”

“Of course, I am selling. Ohuhu. 20 packs again?”

“This time I want 40 packs.”

“.....!”

“Don’t even think about raising the price just because I am buying a lot.”

It was natural. It was 100,000 won for one pack, which was a huge rip-off. The worker’s voice trembled.

“Then it will be four million won in total. Do you have that money?”

“Of course.”

Tae-hyuk handed over a thick envelope under the tray. Once again, it was paid in advance. The worker's eyes changed. It was a tremendous amount of money.

“But clearly the limit is two million won. How did you get such a large sum? Do you have a great banker?”

“That is a large sum so make sure that everything is ready.”

“Ah, okay. Tell me if you need anything else.”

Tae-hyuk smiled.

Cigarettes could move ordinary prisoners. It was something that he could spend money on. Right now, Tae-hyuk's bankbook contained a huge amount of 200 million. He didn't mind investing all of this money to gain gold bullions worth billions of won.

There were two reasons why Tae-hyuk purchased cigarettes. The cigarettes were bait to get information from prisoners. Right now, they were only miscellaneous stories. Eventually, he would get secret stories, like he did with Anchovy.



It also deepened his relationship with the worker. He didn't try to decrease the price of the cigarettes.

Once he returned to his room after finishing the meal, 40 packs were on his bed. The next day, Tae-hyuk bought 40 packs again.

“Wahh! Thank you!”

Within five days of entering the prison, Tae-hyuk had become the worker's largest customer.

---

“Shin Chang-ho is collecting ironware to fight against the Japanese scum. Ah right. This will really be kept a secret?”

“Of course.”

“Thank you!”

Tae-hyuk gave two packs of cigarettes to the other person. In the meantime, there were inmates waiting for their turn. The tacit agreement was to stand at a distance where they couldn't hear what Tae-hyuk and the other person were saying. That way, the other prisoners couldn't hear the story that the person was telling.

The ones who received the cigarettes always said,

“It will really be kept a secret?”

“Of course.”

Then they would cross the building with an expression like they had the whole world in their hands. Once Tae-hyuk checked the time, exercise time was almost ending.

Tae-hyuk stood up and said,

“I’m sorry but business will end here for today. If anyone else has a story then tell me at dinner.”

Sighs were heard from some places.

“Sheesh...”

“Isn’t this too competitive?”

“Damn. It has been a few days already and I feel like I’m going to collapse!”

Tae-hyuk ignored them and approached the worker cleaning the corner of the yard. It was a person he was familiar with, thanks to seeing him for the three meals a day. He was also responsible for trading more than just cigarettes.

As Tae-hyuk approached, the worker smiled and said,

“Would you like to buy cigarettes again?”

“I need something other than cigarettes.”

“Hmmm?”

“Sketchpad and pencil. My hobby is drawing.”

“Hah. With that face? At any rate, you can buy it at the store.”

“No, I need one with a spring.”

The store inside the prison didn't sell anything that could be a weapon. The springs on the sketchpad were made of iron, and could be used as a weapon to choke someone. Because of that, only pages were sold at the store.

“I don't know why you need it, but if you give me money, I will sell it.”

“I will give 200,000 won.”

“Good enough.”

It wasn't a weapon like a knife or something sharp, so the worker

sighed with relief. A spring was much less risky.

‘My stomach is at its limit. I need to take this out as quickly as possible.’

He would prefer to have cutlery or glass, which would make it easier to take out the things in his belly. However, more time was needed to get things like that. Even though it was dirtier, he decided to take it out of his stomach with a pencil.

Tae-hyuk gave money to the worker who said,

“...Once you go to bed this evening, it will be there.”

“Then I will contact you again.”

“Of course.”

After dinner, the sketchpad and pencil were under his bed. He put the pencil in a pencil sharpener and sharpened it by turning it. Yoo Cheol-ho, who was lying on the top bed, extended his head and said.

“Newbie. These days, you often get things delivered to this room. What are you hiding?”

“Are we lovers? What does it matter what I hide?”

“Cough. At any rate, I like you because you sleep very well during the night. Ohuhu.”

Tae-hyuk deliberately pretended not to know that Yoo Cheol-ho was digging a tunnel every night and acted like he was deeply asleep. Yoo Cheol-ho even confirmed the state of Tae-hyuk’s pupils using a LED light that he obtained somewhere. Usually, a person wouldn’t be able to control the movement of their pupils when pretending to sleep. However, Tae-hyuk had the Counterfeit skill and it was easy enough to produce a sleeping face.

“Really? Last time you slept really well.”

Tae-hyuk swung the hidden iron pipe at Yoo Cheol-ho’s head.

“Kuhak!”

Once again, he fell unconscious.

“Tsk tsk. Then I will start.”

Tae-hyuk rolled his blanket and put it in his mouth. Now his screams wouldn’t leak out.

‘First, sharpen the pencil as much as possible.’

He made a sharp awl using the pencil sharpener. Then he pulled off the spring from the sketchpad and connected it to the end of

the pencil. All the preparations were finished.

‘Illegal Surgery...!’

Tae-hyuk used the crime skill. Then Tae-hyuk’s right arm moved at a tremendous speed and the pencil tip pierced his belly.

Puok!

“Kkuck...!”

There was a creepy sound and blood splattered everywhere. There was also enormous pain. The sky was spinning and he almost lost consciousness.

‘Damn, this really hurts.’

If he had a knife then he could do it so that the important parts weren’t hurt. However, he couldn’t do such a careful operation because he was focused on not breaking the pencil lead. Blood constantly flowed from Tae-hyuk’s belly. It would be dangerous if he dragged this out for a long time.

Finish it as quickly as possible!

“Kuook...!”

Tae-hyuk clenched his teeth and slid the pencil to the other side of his belly. Then the spring at the end entered the belly sideways.

‘Now it is time to finish this!’

Tae-hyuk grabbed the end of the spring tightly and moved his hands.

Gruk!

Gruruk!

Gruuuok!

There was a strange sound as the spring inside Tae-hyuk’s belly started to gradually come out. At the same time, Tae-hyuk’s belly split apart.

Crunch!

His intestines emerged from the completely cut stomach.

“Heok... Kuheok... Heok!”

‘I-It’s a success...’

He succeeded even without anesthesia. He did it with a pencil

and spring. However, the most important thing still remained. Tae-hyuk put his hand in his stomach and found the silicone pack kept near there.

“Kuoock, keeeok, kuaack!”

Muffled screams emerged from his mouth. If it wasn't for the cloth blocking his mouth, then it wouldn't be strange for the guards to immediately come running. However, he was able to safely retrieve what he was looking for.

Tae-hyuk's stomach contained the Demon Revealing Mirror and silicone bag. It was the only way to bring in a mirror from the outside.

‘I can't lose my mind here!’

Tae-hyuk manipulated the screen of the Demon Revealing Mirror with a trembling hand and used Cancel.

Kuooooong!

His ears rang. It felt like someone was drilling at his head. The intestines that emerged started to be sucked into his body. His sliced belly was restored, and the wound disappeared. In the blink of an eye, Tae-hyuk's belly had returned to its original state.

Tae-hyuk pulled out the blanket blocking his mouth. There was blood and pain from where he bit his lip.



“Damn. I don’t want to experience that again...”

Fortunately, an anesthetic was ready for insertion, so it wasn’t as painful.

“...However, it is a success.”

Tae-hyuk set aside the Demon Revealing Mirror and looked at the things in the silicon pack that he just took out.

In it...

## Chapter 107 – Pieces Of The Puzzle #4

---

He had the things needed to control Yoo Cheol-ho, and now he could really start exploring the prison. After taking out the goods in his stomach, Tae-hyuk sat on the bed and rested for a while.

Even if the wound disappeared with ‘Cancel’, the damage to the body remained.

“...But even the blood is gone? Isn’t this almost like turning back time?”

Tae-hyuk looked at the bed sheets that had been soaked in his blood. It was so dirty that it wouldn’t have been cleaned even if he washed it. But now it was like being dried in the sunshine after being washed in a steam machine.

“Then I need to hide these.”

The silicon pack contained multiple medications and cards. He took out everything from the pack, rolled it upside down, and took out a small waterproof sheet. Once he unfolded it, the same pattern as the wall of the cell was drawn. The silicon pack was stretched as thinly as possible, pressed to the wall, and the waterproof sheet was stuck on top. He used Forgery on the sides to make it naturally connect to the wall. It couldn’t be found unless the pattern of the wall was carefully touched.

“It is really perfect...!”

Tae-hyuk looked at his work with a satisfied expression. Since he became a Noble, the quality of Forgery has risen further. What about the 'King' status? Just imagining it gave him goosebumps.

“But what I have to do to become a King?”

He became a Noble by catching black list members and raising his stats. If he thought about it simply, couldn't he become a King the same way? Since then, he had raised his stats a lot but there weren't any messages on the Demon Revealing Mirror. Maybe he couldn't get promoted in the same way.

“Well, won't I know sooner or later? First, let's just do what I need to do for now.”

He checked Yoo Cheol-ho's status and saw no signs of waking up. Tae-hyuk scratched his head and put the spring back in the sketchpad.

“I have paper and a pencil so I'll draw a blueprint of this place.”

He never knew what would happen in prison, so he would just do what he could. Tae-hyuk sharpened the pencil, which had distorted into a weird shape, one more time so that he could draw something. Then he did the same thing as he did in Atlantis.

Less than 10 minutes later, he had a blueprint of this place. He put it in the place where he hid the medicine.

“Kuoong... I don’t feel good. I keep sleeping all day long.”

Yoo Cheol-ho, who was lying on the top bunk, woke up and stretched.

“Eh? Why does my head hurt?”

He touched the back of his head as he felt a sharp pain.

Tae-hyuk said with a smile,

“A guard came. You were so deeply asleep that he hit you.”

“Damn. When I get the chance, I’ll pay that bastard back.”

Yoo Cheol-ho gritted his teeth as he thought about the guards.

Some time passed.

“Hey Newbie.”

Yoo Cheol-ho laughed and looked down at Tae-hyuk.

“Don’t be so hard. I growled like that last time because I didn’t know who you were. Now I know you well so let’s be friendly with

each other.”

Tae-hyuk was supposed to be sentenced for seven years due to special theft and assault. Yoo Cheol-ho learned about this and treated Tae-hyuk as a subordinate.

“I’ll consider it.”

“Ohuhu... Newbie. Aren’t there rumors that you have something good?”

Yoo Cheol-ho made a smoking gesture.

‘Ah, he also smokes.’

Tae-hyuk didn’t see it often because Yoo Cheol-ho didn’t have money, but he remembered seeing several cigarettes.

“Do you have a story to tell me?”

“I don’t. Instead, how about this?”

In fact, Yoo Cheol-ho did have information that he could offer for the cigarettes. However, it would be dangerous if the information entered the guards’ ears. Of course, Yoo Cheol-ho never dreamt that Tae-hyuk already knew about it.

Tae-hyuk looked at Yoo Cheol-ho like he was interested.

“Is there anyone you want to kill? Originally, I don’t accept any contracts. I’m only doing it this time because we are roommates. Ohuhu, if you tell me their name and where they live, then I will send them to the other world. How about it?”

Tae-hyuk smiled without saying anything. He was someone who returned to jail after successfully escaping twice.

Yoo Cheol-ho was in jail right now. Telling someone that he would kill a person was like saying that he was thinking of escape. In addition, Yoo Cheol-ho wasn’t a professional killer like the Chinese man Tae-hyuk recently met. Yoo Cheol-ho just killed a few people weaker than him.

“I’m sorry, but the conditions are the same for everyone. Bring information that will please m, then I’ll give you cigarettes.”

Tae-hyuk pulled out a pack and shook it in Yoo Cheol-ho’s face, as if it was a taunt. Yoo Cheol-ho didn’t know if it was planned but he saw it that way. Yoo Cheol-ho reached out a trembling hand towards Tae-hyuk.

Then he coughed a few times before lying back down on the bed.

“Cough. That’s okay. Be stingy.”

It seemed like it would be a few days before Yoo Cheol-ho gave in.

There was nothing to do here except to eat and smoke. Therefore, that temptation was intense. Tae-hyuk and extended a cup full of sticky coffee to Yoo Cheol-ho.

“I’ll give it for free.”

“Wait a few days. I’ll come with a great story.”

Yoo Cheol-ho gulped down the coffee without knowing that there were strong sleeping pills inside. After less than five minutes, he was in a deep sleep.

Tae-hyuk decided to leave the cell tonight.

---

He slapped Yoo Cheol-ho’s cheeks hard enough to make a sound. However, there were no signs of him waking up. It felt like he was rewarded for the hard work of bringing the medicine in here.

He didn’t hear anything moving except for a few guards patrolling. However, there was the sound of sleepless prisoners gossiping.

Tae-hyuk quietly left the cell using Yoo Cheol-ho’s tunnel. It was only one meter long. However, that was enough for Tae-hyuk.

Tae-hyuk used Counterfeit to disguise his clothes as the guard uniform. The navy uniform of the guards was born. He could walk

through the front door of the prison and no one would notice. He could escape without the tunnel.

“First of all, let’s confirm where I can go.”

Tae-hyuk walked casually down the hallway lined with cells. He could hear them talking.

“...I have to kill him.”

There was somebody burning another person’s flesh.

“Nowadays, the technology regarding gene collection has developed so much that your identity will be known if you leave a hair or skin cell behind.

“Then what can I do?”

“First of all, the best thing is to build a workshop with a tarp where you can handle the other person. Even if blood splashes, all the traces will disappear once the vinyl is peeled off. But if you can’t do that, you need to do some DNA removal.”

“Hoh...”

There was also someone giving away his secret know-how. The prison was basically a correctional facility. But in this manner, it became a crime school to transfer their skills to others.



Tae-hyuk clicked his tongue and muttered,

“How is that not one of these guys change?”

It was cute that they liked bragging about the crimes they committed. As Tae-hyuk was exploring, he heard something strange.

“Then did you trade with the newbie who entered last week?”

“What about it? I can smoke a cigarette after a long time.”

“No matter how I looked at it, something is strange. Maybe he is a spy planted by the cops.”

“He doesn’t smell like a cop. Plus, have you seen his appearance? If he is a cop then I am the police commissioner.”

“Kuhaha. Anyways, it stinks.”

“But I was wondering about what he was hearing. Apparently it isn’t crime related? He also didn’t ask anything about other criminals.”

“Kuoong... Really? Then what the hell is his purpose?”

“Shh! There is a guard.”

“.....”

Tae-hyuk deliberately made his footsteps louder and confirmed who the prisoner was.

‘Hrmm, I was expecting some people to be suspicious. It is this guy.’

He was someone who successfully broke out of Blue Dragon Prison with Yoo Cheol-ho.

‘Anyway, I need a good reason for gathering the information.’

This place was very narrow. The doubts would soon spread like an epidemic. Before that, he needed to take some measures.

Tae-hyuk quietly left the area where the Korean inmates lived.

---

Once he moved to the area where the Chinese prisoners lived, he felt something strange. In the darkness, a few guards and Chinese inmates were leaving the cells and moving somewhere.

“...It isn’t an escape. What is it?”

Since he got the crime skills, Tae-hyuk's eyesight had sharpened. He could see the shapes of people from far away in the moonlight.

The suspicious group was going to an off limits area. It was a place Tae-hyuk had never been, despite living here for nearly 10 years.

“They aren't sneaking in to secretly dig up the gold are they?”

Tae-hyuk followed behind the group. They arrived near a place where someone was standing guard.

‘What, there are no cells in there, so what is he guarding? Isn't this huge?’

Tae-hyuk recalled the face of one of the guards in charge of the Chinese. Fortunately, he knew someone.

‘Then Disguise!’

Tae-hyuk changed his face and casually approached the guard.

“Ah, you went through a lot of trouble.”

“Uh, didn't you just pass by?”

“What nonsense are you saying? Did you fall asleep while

working?”

“Ah, no. Keep up the good work!”

He easily passed by the guard.

“Strange... I could’ve sworn that he just went by.”

Tae-hyuk smiled and followed the people ahead of him. The place where the Chinese people ended up was a huge vegetable garden. The Chinese prisoners and guards were harvesting something.

“Hurry! This is the warden’s command! The harvesting must be finished by tomorrow!”

Then Chinese curse words emerged. Tae-hyuk realized what the plant was.

‘...Cannabis?’

It was very difficult to grow cannabis since the awful smell made it difficult to grow it indoors. Nurturing it like this...

‘This is what the warden was hiding.’

He estimated that there was around 200~300 trees.

‘Can’t 15g be extracted from a single tree?’

Let’s say there are 300 trees. An enormous amount of drugs, 4.5 kg at a time, was being grown in the prison. It was enough to make thousands of people addicts.

‘It is around 50,000 won for 1g... So around 300 million won for one harvest?’

It seemed like the Blue Dragon Prison wouldn’t have just one farm. After harvesting the cannabis, carrots and radishes could be planted to disguise it as an ordinary garden. Drug growing was possible because outsiders only entered here a few times a year.

Tae-hyuk’s mouth twitched.

He had no idea that he would find a drug field when he went looking for gold.

## Chapter 108 – Pieces Of The Puzzle #5

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As the amount of sleeping pills decreased, the amount of information that Tae-hyuk gathered increased. The total amount of drug farms inside the prison numbered seven. Most of the Chinese inmates confined in Blue Dragon Prison worked there.

The warden, along with a great number of guards, was involved. This place was literally a gigantic drug factory.

‘Come to think about it, there are definitely some strange things.’

Blue Dragon was very active in accepting foreign prisoners. It was very difficult to deal with foreigners who had different cultures and languages, but that didn’t mean that there weren’t separate benefits.

‘There is probably a certain amount of profit from exploiting the labour force.’

He also knew why they mobilized the Chinese inmates. The country of China had an enormous penalty for drug-related crimes. China was a country where people were sentenced to death for smuggling drugs without any chance of retrial, regardless of nationality.

Once, a young woman travelling to China was asked to show her bag at the airport. Surprisingly, the contents contained drugs. She was arrested on suspicion of drug smuggling by Chinese police officers who had suddenly appeared.

In the end, there were many ghost stories about the death penalty.

‘Although they’re growing drugs, the Chinese prisoners obviously won’t tell anyone unless they’re interested in committing suicide. The security is based on fear of their lives. The Chinese criminals are eligible.’

Now Tae-hyuk knew why the warden was acting so strangely in regards to the Park Sung-yul case.

‘He didn’t want the detectives to find out this information.’

Drugs were being harvested from seven farms. Obviously, they would use the connections with numerous criminals to trade it. The warden was trying to prevent it from being exposed, at the expense of Park Sung-yul.

‘His expression at the time meant this.’

The missing pieces of the puzzle were slowly being found, but not all of the problems were completely solved.

‘The warden is using the Chinese inmates to grow drugs. What’s going on with the Japanese prisoners then?’

Perhaps there were other crimes besides drug trafficking in the

Blue Dragon Prison. After a few days of searching, Tae-hyuk found the place where the Japanese army buried their gold. As if it was a joke of fate, the drugs were growing on top of it.

Tae-hyuk muttered quietly.

“If I call the police using the name Phantom and uncover the drug farm, the warden can be sent to jail. But what’s the fun in that? Besides, I still have two weeks left, so it’s best if I can handle both the Park Sung-yul and the drug cases at once.”

He came up with a perfect plan to solve both cases simultaneously.

“Anyway, I’ll have to talk to Shin Chang-ho.”

---

It had been almost two weeks since Phantom left for Blue Dragon Prison.

Kang-suk was organizing the files of the victims killed by Park Sung-yul at the Central Investigation Headquarters. There were dark circles under the eyes of Joo Hyun-ho, who was sitting opposite of him.

He was in charge of several additional cases and was unable to leave for a few days.



“There is still no contact from Phantom?”

“Yes. I would like it if he gives one or two pieces of useful information.”

“Doesn’t he have to get in touch with you first?”

“Yes. Then there will be something big later.”

“Hahaha! Big? Sunbae, that word is always associated with Phantom now. Won’t there be some big corruption?”

“Hey! Don’t say that!”

Dururu-

At that time, Kang-suk’s phone on the table started to ring. Hyun-ho wanted to know who was calling.

“Ah, I’m sorry. It’s just a little brother I know.”

Then Hyun-ho dropped his head and muttered,

“Ahh, Phantom... Why isn’t Phantom...”

Kang-suk ignored the grouchy Hyun-ho and answered the call. It was a call from Seo Tae-hyuk.

“Uh, Tae-hyuk.

–Kang-suk hyung, it’s been a while.

“Yeah, have you been studying well?”

–Ah, I’m studying hard at my one month short-term studying course. Anyways, Noona asked me to tell you that she was thankful for the food last week.

“Ha-ran... She should tell me something like that directly. Um.”

Seo Tae-hyuk’s sister, Seo Ha-ran, was staying in a dormitory academy on weekdays and only returned home on the weekends. Unfortunately, both of Ha-ran’s younger brothers were away from home. Kang-suk was uneasy about Ha-ran being left at home alone, so he went and met her every week, bringing along her favorite foods.

–I can feel comfortable about her safety thanks to Hyung. Thank you.

“What is this? I didn’t do anything. And thanks to this, I get to have a date with Ha-ran every weekend... Huhu.”

–Then please look after her for the last two remaining weeks as well.

“Yes. Study hard and don’t worry.”

Kang-suk smiled and hung up. Then Hyun-ho, who was listening to the call, said,

“I guess that is Sister-in-law’s younger brother?”

“Hey! How many times have I said that she isn’t your sister-in-law? Hup hup. He is very good at studying, so a foundation sent him to a program abroad. Thanks to him, I have a date with Ha-ran every weekend.”

“So that’s why you disappear every weekend. Don’t you feel sorry for me, who has to work the night shift every weekend?”

“Okay, I understand. Do you want to go for dinner this evening? At any rate, don’t I have to work hard so that my little brother isn’t ashamed? We’ll have a break at the end. Let’s get back to work.”

“Yes.”

Kang-suk scratched his head and turned his attention back to the papers piled on the desk.

“There are so many reports that I have to write. Ah, yes. I have to go to the aquarium this weekend with Ha-ran. Doesn’t she like

dolphins?”

The piled up fatigue disappeared as he imagined her happiness.

---

“The next puzzle should be this one.”

Park Sung-yul was very happy about his game with Cho Kang-suk. Even he struggled to solve some of the puzzles created in his head.

There were still 10 puzzles remaining. How long could he enjoy this in the future? Just imagining it caused a smile to form on his face. It would be interesting to watch the detective be perplexed by his gifts.

However, the more expensive and delicious the food, the more slowly he needed to eat.

“Ohuhuhu... Detective, you should be my best rival, like how the Joker is the foil to the Batman.”

These thoughts gave Park Sung-yul the greatest pleasure, and before he knew it, Park Sung-yul realized that he had a strong erection. It felt like he was the protagonist of a movie. The thought of being more special than everyone else stimulated him.

Park Sung-yul realized that he was transformed when killing

someone. But now, the confrontation with Cho Kang-suk was the only way to relive his desires.

“Huhuhu... Then I’ll give you the best puzzle.”

He smiled and took out the sketchbook kept under his bed. There was a strange poem that couldn’t be easily interpreted. If he sent this along with the letter, what would be Cho Kang-suk’s expression?

The first puzzle was a tutorial. The difficulty was easy and it was simple to deduce the elementary school where he went. But now it was different. He had spent a month preparing the best puzzle, and it absolutely wouldn’t be easy to solve.

“Detective Cho Kang-suk... I think about you all day – is this love? If so, I definitely love you. Ohuhu...”

Park Sung-yul’s twisted affection exploded towards the detective who had caught him.

---

Even if only three people gathered together, there had to be a leader among them. It was the same with the inmates in the prison. If someone asked for the name for the leader of the Korean inmates, everybody would recall the same face.

Shin Chang-ho, part of one of the three major crime organizations in South Korea, ‘Gallery.’ He was a human beast

with a stocky, large body, giving him the nickname 'Brown Bear'. The reason why he was imprisoned despite his power was simple: the boss was in danger of being caught by an enemy's trap. In return, Shin Chang-ho was promised the number three position in the organization after his release.

It was already three years ago. After four years, he would return to the ranks of Gallery. In Blue Dragon Prison, there were several inmates belonging to Gallery. He told them that he would be a high ranking official in Gallery after his release. No one was able to ignore Shin Chang-ho.

"Well, I just need to think of it as a long vacation."

Shin Chang-ho made full use of the one hour of exercise time. It wasn't because he wanted to show off a strong look to the other inmates, it was just that exercising was part of his life. Around Shin Chang-ho, some criminals from Gallery guarded him with menacing glares. They were like bodyguards.

At that time, someone approached Shin Chang-ho. A bodyguard threatening him with a scary voice,

"Who is approaching?"

Shin Chang-ho received a towel from another bodyguard and wiped the sweat from his forehead.

He confidently looked at the person approaching. A half shaved

head and a rotten face. It was the newcomer who became well-known in the prison in only two weeks.

“Tobacco Seller Newbie, what do you want from me? I’m sorry, but I don’t smoke.”

“Shin Chang-ho. I have something to suggest to you.”

The bodyguards growled at the newcomer,

“This bastard...! Do you know who you are talking to?”

“You guys should know better than me. Shin Chang-ho, 37 years old. The boss of Gallery is known to have raised him, but he is actually from a small orphanage in Seoul.”

Then Shin Chang-ho’s lips twitched. Although Tae-hyuk didn’t say a lot, only a few people in Gallery knew this information.

“...How did you know?”

“The method doesn’t matter. Let’s just focus on what we each need.”

“Hoh. It sounds like the newbie has something I want.”

“Of course. You have a sister that is two years younger than you

named is Shin Seo-yeon. Of course, you aren't actually siblings. You were just in the same orphanage. However, once you left the orphanage together, it was like you were brother and sister."

".....!"

Shin Chang-ho's eyes widened. How did the newbie know about Seo-yeon?

"She hid herself after you went to jail. Don't you want to know where she is now?"

Shin Chang-ho glared at the other person for a moment.

"...Newbie. Who the hell are you?"

"Don't you want to know? Why she had to disappear."

"...I want to know."

"Then I will tell you if you give me what I want."

Tae-hyuk laughed as he looked at the puzzle piece that could solve both the Park Sung-yul and drug cases at the same time.



# Chapter 109 – Jail War #1

---

This newbie, what the hell did he want?

Shin Chang-ho's eyes narrowed as he looked at the person before him. Until now, Shin Chang-ho just saw Kim Cheol-su as a weird newbie. However, he became a presence that couldn't be ignored as soon as the name Shin Seo-yeon emerged from his mouth.

She was the only family that Shin Chang-ho, an orphan, had. Once Shin Chang-ho left the orphanage, he didn't get a job and roamed the back alleyways to play. Then he was scouted by high-ranking members of Gallery who saw his unique strength and stamina, thus becoming a member. And 10 years later, the person from the back alleyways became a chief in the huge organization.

But things had turned out strangely. He wanted to live like a human, but then he ended up going to jail instead of the boss. Before entering the prison, Shin Chang-ho said to his sister,

“Just wait seven years.”

Then she replied with a smile,

“I've already waited 10 years, seven more isn't too long.”

“Once I return, I will be a high-ranking official of the organization. Then let's get married.”

“.....”

Shin Chang-ho confessed his longing of 20 years. She waited for a moment before tearfully nodding. It was a little too late, but he had the confidence to make her happy. But the next day, she didn't contact him after returning home.

At first, he thought she was just sorting out her mind. However, she didn't contact him for a week. Shin Chang-ho felt irritated and desperately wanted to find her. However, the only thing he could do was order his men outside to look for her. Everything would be over if he broke out now.

Time constantly passed by. One month... Half a year... Then three years.

He couldn't find her despite searching the whole country. She had been waiting for Shin Chang-ho all her life, but now Shin Chang-ho was the one in the position of waiting. There was a saying that a person didn't realize how important something was until it was gone. Shin Chang-ho realized that it was true.

In a situation where he had halfway given up, her name emerged from the mouth of a newcomer. Shin Chang-ho's fingertips started shaking, and he whispered in a small voice so that his bodyguards couldn't hear.

“...If you find her then I can give you my life.”

Tae-hyuk laughed and said,

“The Brown Bear of Gallery has a pure love story.”

“If it is a lie then it will be hard for you to stay here.”

Tae-hyuk shrugged.

“Don’t worry. I definitely know her whereabouts.”

Shin Chang-ho made gestures for his bodyguards to withdraw. Of course, he didn’t 100% trust the other person. However, he was desperate enough to grab a rotten line.

“Then let’s hear the story in detail.”

Tae-hyuk opened his mouth after a pause that was long enough for rice to cook.

“Sooner or later, a war will break out in here. I want to cooperate with you.”

“What do you mean? You will tell me where my sister is if we work together?”

“That’s right. Of course, it doesn’t mean that you will be my subordinate. You will be treated as an equal partner.

Then Shin Chang-ho's lips twitched.

“...So what benefit can you get from this?”

“I just want you to do some simple things for me. There is someone I have a personal grudge against. There is information I won't be able to get by myself.”

“Personal grudge? Who is it?”

“...Park Sung-yul.”

Shin Chang-ho licked his lips. The name of a man he knew emerged from the mouth of the newbie.

“That gloomy guy. What do you want from him?”

“I will tell you once we become a little closer.”

“Hrmm...”

Shin Chang-ho groaned as he started to think, and his eyes narrowed in suspicion.

“...You are hiding something. However, it is difficult to reject your proposal. If you confirm one thing, I will accept it.”

Shin Chang-ho had an unbelievable authoritative aura after being stuck in prison for three years. He slowly approached the other person and whispered in his ear.

“Prove that you aren’t a spy planted by a cop, and I will listen to your proposal.”

Tae-hyuk smiled, pulled out a notebook and handed it to Shin Chang-ho.

“What?”

“Read it.”

Shin Chang-ho accepted Tae-hyuk’s notebook and started reading the contents without saying anything. There was no need to.

Shin Chang-ho stared at the other person like he was spellbound. Something huge was written in the notebook.

“I know a lot that will help with the war.”

“...A-Are the words written here true?”

Shin Chang-ho couldn’t believe his eyes. His voice was shaking with excitement. It was natural that he reacted in such a way. The

contents of the notebook were huge.

There was information on the businesses entering and leaving Blue Dragon Prison, the shift table with the working hours of the guards, and the route they took to get here. In addition, there were numerous secret documents about the Blue Dragon Prison filling the small notebook. If this was known to be in the hands of criminals, some of the heads of the people in charge would fly away.

“You know that I am gathering information here. Of course, I didn’t start just two weeks ago.”

The notebook contained information that was collected inside and outside the dungeon. But he was giving something this important to Shin Chang-ho? Just to help him stalk Park Sung-yul?

Shin Chang-ho gulped.

“...I understand. I don’t believe that you are a spy. But I want to ask what you are going to do with this? Are you planning an escape?”

“I told you. It is still a secret.”

Shin Chang-ho slowly nodded.

The other person was bigger than he thought. Just before, Shin

Chang-ho thought he was a spy planted by the police, but the chances of that being true was low, now that this information was given to him. Shin Chang-ho could do anything in Blue Dragon Prison is he had the information in the notebook. It would be a tremendous help in the war against the Japanese inmates.

“This much information, why are you giving it to me?”

“I gave you only 30%.”

“At the very least, there should’ve been a relationship between us in the beginning.”

Tae-hyuk just smiled instead of answering. Based on his memories, he would imprisoned here four years later. The man in front of him should’ve been released four years later. Nevertheless, Tae-hyuk knew Shin Chang-ho because he caused an incident and a few years were added to his sentence.

“Then for now, tell me how I can help you.”

Shin Chang-ho was Tae-hyuk’s mentor. Tae-hyuk wouldn’t have survived 10 years in this place if it wasn’t for him. Tae-hyuk looked at Shin Chang-ho like he was seeing a friend after a long time.

---

“H-How great. Did you think of this all by yourself?”

Shin Chang-ho exclaimed with wide eyes. Kim Cheol-su didn't just have information, his ability to plot and intimidate the enemy was enormous as well.

Tae-hyuk smiled.

'I learned everything from you. Brown Bear.'

"I boast the best connections in the prison, so this should be enough."

Shin Chang-ho said in a trembling voice. He was someone scouted by a high-ranking executive of Gallery.

"But Newbie, if you get out then come work with me. If you join 'Gallery' then you won't have a job anywhere."

"Thanks for the offer, but I can't. I have already made an appointment with another place."

Tae-hyuk had promised to go to university with An Eun-young.

"Haha, I see."

Shin Chang-ho said with a dissatisfied expression. If the newbie entered the gang, then Gallery would get someone huge. However, Shin Chang-ho wasn't like the hero of Romance of the Three Kingdoms, Liu Bei, who visited someone's home three times just to



recruit them.

Anyway, there were many opportunities in the future.

“Then I’ll get started this evening.”

“Please do so.”

After Tae-hyuk left, Shin Chang-ho convened his loyal men and gave them a few simple commands. One of Shin Chang-ho’s men was called a human copier. He used to make forged artwork out in society.

Shin Chang-ho gave some instructions to the human copier.

“I understand Hyung-nim. I just need to go to Park Sung-yul’s room and draw everything I see?”

“Yes. In the evening, some kids will keep an eye on Park Sung-yul. During that time, you will look around Park Sung-yul’s room.”

“I will handle it. Please leave it to me.”

The human copier nodded as he received Shin Chang-ho’s command.

---

At dinner time, the cell doors opened and the prisoners headed to the dining room to eat. Park Sung-yul could feel someone's eyes on him.

“Why are people staring at me today?”

He was a person who didn't have any close friendships and stayed by himself reading books or writing things in his notebook.

“...Is there something on my clothes?”

Park Sung-yul never imagined that he would be the Brown Bear's target and started to eat at the place where he normally sat. Then a few oversized people came up to him with their plates.

“Is it okay to sit here?”

The big people were gangsters.

Park Sung-yul looked at the people before him with a puzzled expression. Even though the dining room didn't set them apart, there was a certain area for the gangsters. Naturally, the gangsters occupied the best place, but why were they sitting next to a serial killer like himself?

Something was strange. However, Park Sung-yul was alone and there were several people in front of him. He couldn't politely refuse.

“Sit down.”

Then three or four oversized people sat around Park Sung-yul. It seemed as though they were threatening him not to escape. He calmly placed rice in his mouth. As Park Sung-yul enjoyed his meal, the human copier quietly entered his room as Shin Chang-ho ordered.

“Now, I shall start working.”

The human copier searched Park Sung-yul’s room and found a few sketchbooks. There were many images and poems that couldn’t be identified. He didn’t have a lot of time, but he could make copies of more than half of the present items.

The human copier put all of Park Sung-yul’s things in their original position with a satisfied expression and headed to Shin Chang-ho’s room.

“Heheh, Hyung-nim. Here it is.”

After confirming the goods, Shin Chang-ho slowly nodded.

“You went through a lot of trouble.”

The human copier acted politely towards him. After a few years, Shin Chang-ho would be a high-ranking official of Gallery. Acting

like this wasn't a loss for him.

“It is nothing. Please call me again if you need anything.”

“Yes.”

After the human copier left, Shin Chang-ho started to look in more detail.

There were some paintings that looked like the scribbles of elementary school students, as well as some mumblings.

“...Why does the newcomer want these things?”

Shin Chang-ho never dreamt that they would be codes pointing to the places where Park Sung-yul had hidden the bodies of his victims. However, he had received the payment for this in advance. Park Sung-yul delivered the puzzles as promised to the newcomer.

“Thank you Brown Bear. There are people waiting for this.”

That evening, the newcomer wrote a letter to someone.

## Chapter 110 – Jail War #2

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“It came...!”

Kang-suk screamed wildly as he opened the door of the investigation headquarters so roughly that it seemed like it would break. Of course, the only person inside was Hyun-ho, but it still felt important.

However, Hyun-ho was dozing off in his chair.

“.....!”

He looked up at Kang-suk with wide and sleepy eyes. Hyun-ho muttered with a bemused expression,

“Sunbae, is it time for lunch already?”

“It sounds like you didn’t hear it so I’ll say it again. The thing we have been waiting for has come!”

“Hmphhh... I guess you did come for lunch.”

Kang-suk put the yawning Hyun-ho into a headlock.

“Keooooook... I-I surrender! I give up!”

“Are you awake now?”

“What is the uproar all of a sudden?”

“Look at this.”

Kang-suk dropped a thick envelope onto the table and said,

“I brought this here since you’ve been asking for it, yet you were sleeping very well.”

Hyun-ho took the envelop with less sleepy eyes and read the text written outside. Then his eyes widened and he shouted,

“You were working properly, Phantom!”

The information from Phantom that the investigation headquarters had been waiting for had finally arrived after 2 weeks.

“Look at your eyes now. You should’ve done that sooner.”

“Sunbae! Can I open it straight away?”

“Yes.”

Kang-suk and Hyun-ho carefully opened Phantom’s letter, like it

would break if they touched it the wrong way. There was a tremendous amount of material on Park Sung-yul inside.

“...Jackpot. Not all of the cases that Park Sung-yul confessed are in there, but there are at least five of them. If all of this was done by Park Sung-yul, then he won’t be able to leave the prison for the rest of his lives.”

“Five? That’s more than I initially thought...”

The words written were roughly at the prophetic level of Nostradamus.

“In addition, each puzzle is hard. This won’t be completed in just a day or two.”

The puzzles would take a few months, or maybe even a few years. The degree of difficulty was much harder than he thought, so his head started to hurt.

Kang-suk moaned and said,

“At first, I thought he confessed to his crime after three years in order for the evidence to disappear, but he might have needed that time just to create all these puzzles. By the way, can you solve it? It looks pretty difficult.”

Hyun-ho smiled so that his teeth were visible and shook his index finger.

“Sunbae, have you ever heard the saying that a created puzzle can always be solved?”

“I think I’ve heard of it... Maybe some time ago?”

“I will prove it by solving Park Sung-yul’s puzzles... Eek.”

Suddenly, a strange sound emerged from Hyun-ho’s mouth as he rummaged through the materials with a confident expression. Kang-suk wondered what Hyun-ho saw and followed his gaze. There was a note left behind by Phantom.

–I have put together what I reasoned for the busy detectives. I hope it helps with the investigation. Don’t get me wrong, this is just a service because I am bored.

His comments on the problems were written in red pen like a teacher. Kang-suk read it and muttered,

“Eh? Isn’t it pretty plausible? All of these answers seem correct. You would have noticed it with one glance. Why isn’t your face pleased?”

Hyun-ho dropped his head and said,

“I wanted to solve it myself! Isn’t this the same as writing the name of the killer on the first page of a mystery novel?”



“Ah, is that so?”

Kang-suk snorted and attempted an additional attack on the back of Hyun-ho’s head.

---

“Director-nim! Remains have been found!”

Kang-suk ran towards the place where the sound was heard and saw the body, which had completely rotted so that only white bones were left, buried deep in the ground.

“Thank you for the effort. I’ll call the coroner.”

“Yes!”

A corpse was really in the place that Phantom had mentioned. This was the last one.

Kang-suk called Coroner Park Min-soo on the radio. It took less than five minutes for a man in a white robe to rush over.

“Kang-suk. You went through a lot of effort. Ah, should I call you Director now?”

“Just speak comfortably. There are only two people in my

investigation headquarters, and the rest are just support people.”

“There aren’t many chances to hear yourself being called Director, so you should take this opportunity to listen to it often.”

“Yes.”

Park Min-soo laughed and checked the condition of the newly discovered body.

“Hrmm...”

“Won’t it be hard to figure out the identity again this time?”

“The status is similar to the other bodies. Usually bodies in the ground don’t rot well. It is called Casper’s Law of Decomposition...”

“You don’t have to explain. I also went to the police academy.”

Casper’s Law of Decomposition stated that if temperature and humidity were equal, the ratio of a body decomposing in air, water and the ground became 1:2:8.

“Haha. I shouldn’t ignore a detective. At any rate, a body buried in the ground for just a few years wouldn’t be decomposed like this.”

“What does that mean?”

“I think it must be treated with special chemicals. It is too well decomposed.”

“Do you know what it is?”

“I need to go back and do a detailed autopsy... It might take a while.”

“.....”

It didn't stop with the discovery of the body. If they couldn't find anything to identify the body, then this case would fall into a maze again.

“The first body found wasn't like this...”

“With that one, I could determine the gender with the body type, and the identity can be found with dental records. It will just take some time.”

Kang-suk groaned in response.

“I want Park Sung-yul to properly confess to his crimes...”

However, he was a person who liked having the police dancing

on the palms of his hand. Over time, the evidence would have disappeared. What weapon could be used to open his mouth? Kang-suk wanted to discover all of the crimes committed by Park Sung-yul in order to appease the dead victims. His brain started working at full strength.

“A person who is a specialist in mind games... ah!”

At that moment, something flashed through Kang-suk’s head.

“Won’t that guy be able to intimidate Park Sung-yul? In addition, he is right next to him.”

Kang-suk recalled his contract with Phantom and decided to add a few lines to it.

---

“By now, they would’ve realized that they can’t figure out the identity of the body. The puzzle would just deepen. Won’t he want to know?”

Someone else was thinking the same thing as Kang-suk. It was Phantom who was up to his own tricks.

Tae-hyuk laughed and looked at the ship for transporting goods that was docked in the port. A ship carrying food and other necessities arrived at Blue Dragon once every three days. Until a few years ago, supplies came to Blue Dragon Prison every day. However, the number of times decreased for some reason.

‘Maybe he wanted to prevent as many outsiders as possible from coming.’

The warden was growing drug farms here, and he did everything in his power to stop it from being exposed.

‘So this trick is possible.’

Tae-hyuk carried some materials and hid it in the engine room while the crew was gathered outside of the boat. It was something that was easy to destroy. Now, it would be impossible for the ship to sail properly without any repairs. It would take a week to fix it properly.

‘There are two ships. First of all, I need to make sure they don’t operate.’

Tae-hyuk exited the boat with a casual expression and returned to his room.

A day passed by. He heard that the supply ships were broken from the guards who didn’t filter their words around the prisoners. Tae-hyuk smiled with satisfaction as he relaxed.

On the other hand, there was an uproar among the guards. In the end, the warden convened an emergency meeting. One of the guards raised his hand and asked a question,

“If this continues, won’t the inmates starve?”

The answer was given by someone standing next to him,

“Don’t worry about it, that absolutely won’t happen. There are two supply ships in the first place, so it is okay for one to fail. Food is also stored in the prison to prepare for this situation.”

“I see, then I don’t need to worry. Well, even if those guys starve...”

“As long as a god doesn’t play a joke, the food supply won’t be cut off. Haha.”

The other guards also laughed.

Unfortunately, there was a god in the prison.

---

“This way, no supplies will enter Blue Dragon Prison for the next week.”

Tae-hyuk smiled as he broke the engine of the second supply ship. Once this became known, the warden and guards would clearly panic.

He had to finish one task before that.

‘It will take around 30 minutes to complete the logistics work.’

Tae-hyuk went back to the prison and headed for the warehouse where food was stored. Except for a napping logistics officer, no one else was there. There were ingredients piled up like mountains. There was enough food for hundreds of people to eat for a few weeks.

“Then it is showtime!”

Tae-hyuk pulled out a small vial of bacteria that caused symptoms of gastroenteritis. Simply put, it was food poisoning bacteria.

Tae-hyuk clicked his tongue.

“...Even if it was in a bottle, I brought this into the prison in my stomach. Truly crazy.”

It was one of the things he brought along with sleeping pills. Tae-hyuk started to distribute it among the food ingredients in the warehouse. Just like pouring salt on food, the specially cultured bacteria would grow.

“Don’t forget to sprinkle it in the refrigerator.”

Tae-hyun also added it to the meat that was as frozen as a stone

and purposely sprayed water on the power cord.

Pajik!

The electricity went out and the refrigerator was turned off. The cold still remained, but it would disappear quickly.

“Always be careful about leaks.”

After a few days, no one would be able to eat any of these foods. Inside the fridge, bananas were stacked for tonight’s dessert. Tae-hyuk peeled a bunch of them then put the white banana in his mouth.

“Only amateurs would contaminate all the food. To have more of an effect, 1/5th of the food needs to survive.

This place was a prison on the island. The guards rotated weekly and stayed in the prison. Absurd things like a drug farm could be done because it was such a closed off space.

“Everybody can endure it if they starve together, but who will eat the food? What will happen in a situation where someone is starving?”

Tae-hyuk gave an evil laugh as he appreciated his work. After tonight, 4/5ths of the ingredients here wouldn’t be able to be eaten.



“Brown Bear wants to fight the Yakuza... But everyone will be at war because of the food.”

He quietly turned off the lights and left the warehouse. By tomorrow morning, everybody in the prison would realize the situation.

And...

A life and death battle would start the war.

## Chapter 111 – Jail War #3

---

Soon after breakfast time. It didn't take long for the guards to realize that something was wrong.

“This group of scum is crazy!”

Even though it was time for some work, a few people were gathered. The new guard next to him giggled and said,

“Are they lazing off after eating?”

“We will put them all in solitary confinement. Let's go see.”

“I understand, Sunbae-nim.”

The new prison guard was filled with a strange confidence shortly after arriving here. He felt like a hero judging heinous criminals. He twirled his rod and entered one of the cells.

“Number 304! What are you doing? Go to work!”

The man sitting on the toilet raised his head. The face that had been fine just yesterday was now in pain. Number 304 groaned and said,

“Guard-nim. I'm sorry. M-My stomach...”

“Ah, what is this smell? Finish up and come out.”

“Yes, I understand.”

The cell next door had a similar situation. No, it was worse.

“F-Finish quickly! I don’t want to see this.”

“It keeps coming. I can’t stop it in the middle.”

“F-Fuck, leaking...”

“Get out of here!”

Something was strange. The same thing was happening in most of the cells. In one room, the person hadn’t been able to reach the toilet and there was a disgusting smell in the room.

“Number 411! Ya, hey!”

The new guard was dismayed as there was no reaction from the prisoner. In the end, he opened the door with a key and went inside.

“.....”

Number 411 had collapsed on the bed like he was dead. The bed was messed up with vomit and feces.

“Stomach pains... Nausea, diarrhea... This is food poisoning!”

In addition, it seemed to be affecting many prisoners.

“We need to report this to the warden!”

The new guard realized that he had to tell the warden before the situation became serious. After an hour went by, the warden and guards gathered for an emergency meeting.

---

“Food poisoning?”

The warden’s face distorted as he heard the report of the prison guards.

A few days ago, the logistics line had broken down, but there was still one ship that could be operated. There were also food ingredients piled up in the warehouse. However, one of the remaining bastions, the food warehouse, had bacteria growing that was causing food poisoning.

Even so, he couldn’t panic. After a week, he could harvest the money from the farms. If outsiders entered here, then he would have to pull them all out. He wanted to avoid that no matter what.

“There aren’t good crops these days so the output is decreasing... If we fail to properly harvest it at this time...”

Just imagining it was terrible. The warden issued instructions to the guards.

“Go to the warehouse and use the food poisoning bacteria detector! We purchased it just for occasions like this.”

“Yep! I understand.”

Some of the guards hurriedly rushed out. In such a situation, it would take a long time to do a full investigation.

“I need to mobilize the remaining supply ship as soon as possible. Damn. In addition, the budget...”

At that time, one of the prison’s secretaries raised his hand.

“Why?!”

“Warden-nim... I was going to tell you today, but the engine for the remaining supply ship is broken.”

“W-What the?”

The warden felt dizzy. It would take a week for the repairs on the other ship to finish. However, if he asked for support from the outside then he risked exposing his gardens.

“Damn. I need to hope that a lot of ingredients are safe.”

The warden sat in his chair and waited for the investigation people to come back. Bad news constantly came in.

“Warden-nim! There is no more room in the infirmary. There are more than 50 patients.”

“There are even guards who are patients. The entire prison is paralyzed.”

“Warden-nim...!”

“Ward..”

His last hope was that the food poisoning bacteria hadn't spread too much.

One hour passed by. Eventually, the team that went to investigate the food ingredients returned.

“Fortunately, not all of the food supply was contaminated with the bacteria.”

“R-Really? I’m glad... How much is still fine?”

“30... No, it is around 20%. There isn’t enough for the guards to eat.”

“Ha!”

The warden collapsed onto his chair as he became aware of the desperate situation. It was the worst.

“What should I do...”

However, he couldn’t get a clear answer.

---

Tae-hyuk went to the store selling food.

They were selling simple food like sausages, canned tuna, and smoked chicken legs. He would like to buy all of it, but it would be considered suspicious if he did so. In the end, he bought only enough to fit into a box of sweets.

“What type of dinner are you having?”

The food store worker asked with a curious expression. Tae-hyuk just smiled instead of answering. This was enough for him to eat alone for a week.

The guards were distracted by the food poisoning epidemic inside the prison.

“They wouldn’t even realize if I tried to escape right now.”

Tae-hyuk muttered with a sausage in his mouth. Ever since he put the bacteria on the food, he hadn’t eaten anything other than instant food.

Once he returned to his cell, Yoo Cheol-ho was groaning on the bed. He had been sitting on the toilet all night but it seemed like it was blocked.

“Kuook...”

Yoo Cheol-ho grabbed his belly and groaned. There were so many patients in the infirmary that he had to stay in his cell. He received a few treatment pills and an IV. In order to prevent dehydration, it was necessary to continue taking electrolytic water, which was simply salt water.

“...Water, give me water.”

Tae-hyuk smiled and grabbed bucket on the table next to Yoo Cheol-ho. His cellmate ended up suffering from his work.

“Do you want me to feed you?”



“...I’ll take care of it.”

Yoo Cheol-ho took the bucket of water with trembling hands and gulped it down. However, more of it flowed down his chin than into his mouth.

“Damn... Those scum should cook the food properly.”

Yoo Cheol-ho grunted from his spot on the bed. Tae-hyuk hid his food in between the sheets. Then he ate one more sausage as he watched the guards walking around.

---

Once a person had food poisoning, they had to drink plenty of water to prevent symptoms of dehydration. If they took antibiotics to treat the bacterial poisoning, they could be cured within a few days.

“Make sure to take the antibiotics 30 minutes after eating. Drink at least two liters of water a day for three days.”

“Ah, thank you.”

The patients in the infirmary finished their treatment and started returning to their rooms. It seemed like the food poisoning incident was finished.

But the main problem was in the dining room. White rice porridge was on the menu twice in a row, which wasn't even enough to fill their stomachs. One of the inmates spoke after receiving the food from the worker,

“What is this? Are we in Auschwitz? Why are we eating something like this?”

The worker responsible for the food distribution replied,

“This is the warden's command. Since everybody became sick from the food poisoning, he ordered porridge to be served. Just eat.”

“Fuck, did I get food poisoning?”

A watching guard came running over and grabbed the inmate's collar.

“Get away right now, Number 974! Didn't I say you would be put in solitary confinement if you fought one more time?”

Then Number 974 said to the guard,

“Ah, is this too much? Still, I'm not eating this.”

“Eat the meal. It is a precious food made from the taxes of the people, so eat it.”

“.....”

“What expression is this bastard making?”

“Nothing.”

Number 974 smiled before heading to his seat with his tray. Of course, Number 974 wasn't the only one who complained. There was no need to use a spoon; they just tilted their plates and poured it into their mouths.

“This isn't enough. Damn, I'm going to get some chicken legs from the store.”

The inmates started flocking towards the store. Although it cost money, they couldn't handle just one bowl of porridge. Number 974 joined the long line to the store. He was able to enter the store just as lunchtime was over.

“What? It is all gone!”

The food that could be eaten had disappeared like locusts had passed by. There were only a few condiments left, such as sesame oil and hot pepper paste. Number 974 asked the worker responsible for the store.

“When will more goods be coming in?”

“I don’t know. At least a week.”

“Crazy. Isn’t there anything to put out this fire?”

The worker pulled out a link of sausage and a chicken leg hidden in a corner of the counter.

“I’ll give this to you. Don’t tell anybody else.”

“I understand. I will eat it well.”

Number 974 went outside thinking that he had become friends with the worker. After a day or two, this rush would end.

He laughed at the thought.

---

Another day passed.

However, the meals didn’t return to normal. The inmates were eating things like anpan. Of course, most of them grabbed their bellies and groaned from hunger.

“What is this? Everything is crazy.

“I heard from someone that the guards are eating very well.”

“Shit. What are we?”

They were trapped in a prison and there was no place to relieve their accumulated stress. After a few days of the food crisis, their anger was reaching a boiling point.

“Hey, do I smell sausage from your body?”

“What nonsense are you saying?”

“No, I’m sure of it. Did you eat secretly?”

The prisoners’ feelings became more intense. Little by little, they became harder for the guards to deal with.

Tae-hyuk watched from a corner and realized that it was almost time for the final stages. The prisoners would now become bombs that would explode. However, they couldn’t do anything against armed guards.

‘I need a hot explosion for the prison war, and it can only be done by him.’

Tae-hyuk looked around for a certain person’s face and sat in front of him.

“The meal is delicious.”

“It is nice to eat.”

Kim Taesung smiled as he faced Tae-hyuk. However, there were no emotions in his eyes. It felt as if he had transcended all things in this world.

“...Bomber Kim Taesung.”

Tae-hyuk quietly said the other person's nickname. Kim Taesung's hands trembled.

“You know my nickname.”

“I know very well.”

“My identity is classified as first class confidential.”

Tae-hyuk smiled.

Not many people knew that Kim Taesung was confined here. He was a man who could make a bomb that would blow up a building. There was a chance he could be taken into a criminal organization, which could lead to terrorism.

The man who smashed the Taesung Group with only one bomb

stared at Tae-hyuk with empty eyes.

“I’ll get straight to the point. Kim Taesung, I want you to do something.”

The God of Crime and the Bomber had a reunion.

## Chapter 112 – Jail War #4

---

Kim Taesung looked at Tae-hyuk for a moment before sprinkling soy sauce over his porridge. He stirred a few times before slowly eating.

“Isn’t this the first time we’ve met? But why? I strangely feel like I’ve met you somewhere.”

Tae-hyuk was the one who put him in here. Of course, Tae-hyuk had no intention of telling that to the Bomber.

“This world is very small. Perhaps we met in passing somewhere?”

“Um... Indeed.”

Tae-hyuk scratched his chin.

TV was also available in prison. However, it didn’t mean that they could see the latest entertainment programs. Only one ‘Enlightenment’ channel was broadcasted. Most of them were documentaries and cultural programs selected by the Department of Justice’s correctional program. They could also only watch it for a certain period of time before going to bed.

In the end, the only news from the outside world were sometimes edited news on the Enlightenment channel. The man who bombed Taesung Group for revenge didn’t know the ending of his story.



This was what Tae-hyuk was aiming for.

“You are a really interesting person. You are the only one crazy enough to do such a ridiculous thing to get revenge on a big company.”

Kim Taesung’s mouth twitched. An emotion appeared for the first time on the middle-aged man’s face. However, Kim Taesung wasn’t the type to come alive over such a thing.

“...I am finished eating. I will get up first.”

“I just arrived in this place, so I know some information about the outside world. You will become motivated if you listen to me.”

Kim Taesung, who was about to rise from his seat, looked at Tae-hyuk with a cold expression. What could possibly change his heart? He put the tray back on the table and pulled canned peaches out of his pocket.

“I ate rice and now I feel like eating fruit. Would you like one?”

“I will eat it thankfully.”

Kim Taesung placed the peach on Tae-hyuk’s plate with no expression. Tae-hyuk cut it in half with a spoon and said,

“Taesung Group was developing a new virus. You would be more

familiar with this fact than anyone else.”

“.....”

A variety of expressions crossed Kim Taesung’s face.

“You didn’t mean to expose it in the first place. You had to give up everything you built as a senior researcher. However, the finished virus was more of a monster than you thought.”

Tae-hyuk spoke the truth about the Taesung case.

“Then you went through a change of heart. You risked your life to expose the truth of what Taesung Group did to the media. I’m sorry but I don’t know what happened in the process; I just know the results.”

The Taesung Group realized Kim Taesung’s betrayal and tried to stop him by taking his family as hostages.

“But there was an unexpected event in Taesung Group. The virus used to hold them hostage had mutated. In the end, the prepared vaccine didn’t work and your family died.”

Kim Taesung’s hands shook. No matter how many years passed, the anger still remained in his heart.

“Yes. Correct. Thus, the Bomber was born, and I killed innocent

people to get revenge for my family. In the end, this happened. I don't know why anyone would be interested in the story where everyone was wounded and destroyed."

"Bomber. You're mistaken."

"Huh?"

"It is still too early in the story. You thought you succeeded in your revenge but then you went to jail..."

Tae-hyuk stopped for a moment and looked into Kim Taesung's eyes. Then the look disappeared as he started speaking again,

"...I know what happened to the Taesung Group after that."

Kim Taesung nodded.

"If you know then I would like to hear it."

For the first time, longing appeared in his voice. Tae-hyuk said with a satisfied expression,

"This is the world. It is never fair. You sinned and got stuck in here. However, not all criminals go to jail."

"...It can't be."

“Yes. The data that you risked your life to get, disappeared due to the carelessness of a manager.”

“T-That...”

Kim Taesung had created a bomb to smash Taesung Group. However, that wasn't enough to make a Korean conglomerate crumble.

“And Taesung Group's president, Song Won-jin was released a little while ago. A senior researcher committed suicide, leaving a suicide note stating that he did everything on his own. In the end, the arrested Taesung Group officials only had to pay a fine. How much would that amount be?”

“.....”

“200 million. That is the value of the lives of your family and the researchers.”

“...Ahhhhh!”

Kim Taesung suddenly screamed, causing the prisoners nearby to jump.

“Why is he doing that?”

“People become crazy after staying here a while. Leave it alone.”

Tae-hyuk whispered to Kim Taesung.

“Then what should you do? You can’t get out of here until you die. The executives of Taesung Group have already returned to the company like nothing happened, and the mass media didn’t report it so the interest of the public gradually disappeared. They just dimly remember that there was a crazy bomber. Is it okay to end it like this?”

“...I, what...?”

“Your revenge failed because you thought this world was just. You thought the opponent would be judged before you exposed their sins? But this is South Korea.”

“Kuhuuuok...”

“Don’t you want to take revenge for their actions? This time, don’t rely on the media and police and judge them directly.”

Kim Taesung bit his lip. If he could, he would’ve laughed and died on the spot rather than going to prison. However, Kim Taesung wasn’t stupid enough to just believe the other person.

“Is it possible?”

“Yes. To make a deal, I will show my hand first. I will tell you more tonight.”

“Huh? We are in the cells at night...”

“So then wait for me there.”

Tae-hyuk bit the other half of the peach. His tongue enjoyed the sweet taste of the sugar.

That night, Kim Taesung opened his mouth and looked at the other person. Kim Cheol-su entered the cell dressed in the clothes of a guard.

---

‘This is a long-term use.’

Kim Taesung promised to cooperate with Tae-hyuk in return for breaking him out and help in getting revenge on Taesung Group.

‘He can make a big bomb that blows up buildings.’

The four bombs he left behind had been very useful in the past few months. But could he supplement it? It was enough with the crime skills.

Tae-hyuk looked at the note given to him by Kim Taesung. It

contained the ingredients needed to make a bomb. Kim Taesung promised that he could create a significant explosion in the prison with these things.

Tae-hyuk was aware of his skills more than anyone else.

‘It will be busy tonight.’

Tae-hyuk checked on Yoo Cheol-ho’s state, who was completely asleep, and entered the tunnel. He didn’t forget to take the keys hidden by the entrance. He had snatched it away from a new guard a few days ago. The guard would be suffering after knowing he lost it.

After leaving the cell, Tae-hyuk grasped the position of the guards with Spying. He had a lot to do tonight. First, he had to collect the bomb materials and then steal the faces of the remaining guards for a full-scale war.

Up to now, Tae-hyuk could imitate the faces of five guards. It was impossible to completely disguise as them. The guards walked around when they weren’t working, so something could go wrong if he accidentally ran into them.

A greater variation of disguises was needed to ensure his safety. He would double the number tonight.

Tae-hyuk changed his clothing with Counterfeit and disappeared into the darkness.

---

Four days have passed since the meals had first changed. The complaints of the prisoners became severe enough to pop.

It was currently the fun exercise time. Exercise time was for only 60 minutes a day, and was a very precious time for the prisoners. It was the only chance for them to experience the cool air and move their bodies freely.

As usual, people with similar minds gathered together to play badminton or basketball. However, they hadn't been able to eat a proper meal for days. The only inmates jumping around were the foreigners.

The South Korean inmates huddled in a corner and swore at the guards.

“Does this make sense? We are the only ones being starved.”

“That guard over there is about to throw his food away. Can't he sprinkle some leftovers on my rice?”

“Wow, those evil bastards. Isn't this too much?”

“I was sniffing around the kitchen and discovered a guard eating. Fuck... I thought all the corn was gone.”



“...I will get those bastards fired as soon as I am out of here.”

“When are you going to finish? Take me as well. I just extended...”

The bloody conversation was over.

Normally, the anger towards the guards would've already subsided. But since yesterday, the behaviour of the guards became especially bad. The warden had issued an order a few days ago not to agitate the nerves of the prisoners, yet some crazy guards still continued their tyranny.

Shin Chang-ho looked at the agitated prisoners with serious eyes from a corner of the playground. His bodyguard said,

“Hyung-nim. Cheol-su was right. The guards are acting ridiculous and the complaints of the prisoners are skyrocketing.”

Shin Chang-ho muttered with a groan. It felt more like a war with the prison guards instead of the Japanese.

“There really might be a war, but it still lacks the fire. Three days... We just need to wait three days.”

The guards were armed with stun guns and gas guns. If Shin Chang-ho made a mistake here, then he would be punished with solitary confinement. But no matter how angry the prisoners were, they wouldn't explode without a trigger.

Please keep quiet...

Shin Chang-ho closed his eyes and begged. However, the fires of war broke out from a very small place.

---

It was time for dinner, and the menu was once again the same old porridge. Now it was too exhausting to even complain.

“Fuck, again? Then I should eat the one I was saving.”

Prisoner 974 pulled out the sausage he had been hiding. It was the precious emergency food he got from the store. He started to peel it in order to eat it.

But with perfect timing, one of the guards struck his arm. The sausage fell and rolled on the ground. Number 947’s eyes widened.

“M-My sausage!”

Fortunately, the skin area was touching the ground so he could still eat it if he cut a little bit off.

“Ah, I’m sorry. The precious sausage is gone.”

The guard laughed and stepped on 974’s hand that was stretching

to pick up the sausage.

“Kuaaack!”

974 screamed as his hand and sausage were stepped on at the same time.

“Ah, sorry... I wasn’t expecting you to pick it up to eat. Well. I think you can still eat it if you clean it well. Haha!”

In the end, 974 couldn’t endure it anymore and exploded.

“Fucking bastard!”

Bam!

He punched the guard who stepped on his fingers. Then the watching guards ran over with their rods.

“You over there! What are you doing now? Put him in solitary!”

“Ah? Solitary? I don’t care about that anymore! Just let me kill this bastard!”

Number 974 slapped at one of the guard’s rods. It struck the face of the prisoner sitting next to him. In the end, the inmates nearby joined in the fight.

“Kill them!”

“Aaaaack!”

“Fuuuuuckers!”

Even the guards who ran over to stop them got involved in the struggle. In the end, the war between prisoners and guards started with one sausage.

The guard who stepped on the sausage had a nosebleed. However, he smiled and licked his lips. The guard muttered in a small voice,

“—As planned.”

## Chapter 113 – Jail War #5

---

There were some cases where a war was caused by really minor things. However, just one sausage caused a war in prison.

“.....”

The warden sat in his office and grabbed the few hairs that he had remaining.

“...In just two days, the ingredients would’ve arrived, and you would’ve had a normal meal again. But you couldn’t bear this much...”

However, the warden was mistaken. Only the warden and prison guards who knew this fact, while the inmates didn’t know when they would be allowed to have proper food again. How many people would be able to endure it and wait?

This place was a prison. It was divided between the inmates and the guards who managed them. The guards could leave on a weekly basis to rest and recharge. However, those imprisoned here wouldn’t be able to leave until their sentence was over, or until they were released on parole.

For them, exercise time and meal times were the only moments they could relieve their stress. This was all lost at the same time.

The warden didn’t consider the feelings of the prisoners at all. If

he did, the the food poisoning incident and lack of food for a week might have ended up differently. However, the warden thought of the prisoners as people who should be controlled and enlightened. The likelihood of him bending any other way was 0%.

“Right now, the situation is urgent.”

Then the deputy, who was carefully watching the warden, opened his mouth and said.

“First, the dining room and gallery are completely occupied.”

“Then I guess they are armed with cooking tools.”

“Yes. But most of them are unharmed because there aren’t many tools.”

“Cough!”

“Fortunately, they can’t enter the warehouse because it is blocked.”

It was fortunate from the warden’s position. The warehouse contained weapons to prepare for any situation. Tear gas, gas masks, electric shockers, gas guns, etc...

“That is why I am authorizing the use of firearms in the prison. Isn’t it the only way to end this?”

“That’s right. Although won’t the human rights groups object?”

“It’s not like they are enjoying any freedom from their cells. Prepare to suppress them. All of them will be put in solitary confinement.”

“Warden-nim... There are so many prisoners involved that there won’t be enough room in solitary confinement.”

The warden glared at the deputy and shouted,

“Then increase it even more! At any rate, you have an hour and a half to quell them. I will take command.”

“Understood!”

---

At the same time, Number 974 was aligning his fingers in the dining room.

“Kuooooook!”

The task was done without anesthesia, so it was extremely painful. If he went to the infirmary then he could receive proper treatment, but he would end up being beaten up by the guards.

“Number 974... Ah, I’m sorry. That has become a habit. Park Joon-shik, please endure the pain.”

However, Park Joon-shik tried to forget about his pain by thinking about the target of his anger.

“W-Where is that bastard guard!”

“I’m sorry but I don’t know...”

“Damn!”

Park Joon-shik’s treatment ended, although it was a bit rough. Park Joon-shik looked around with torn clothes and a hand wrapped in a bandage.

“...He disappeared like a ghost. Obviously he was here...”

“Does this makes sense?”

Park Joon-shik glared at the guards tied up in one corner of the restaurant. They were those who saw the prison guard being assaulted and came to help. But despite being armed with gas guns and rods, they couldn’t help being overwhelmed by the huge difference in numbers.

“Oof...!”



The bound guards couldn't do anything but scream. Park Joon-shik approached them and slapped one of the guard's cheeks.

“Where is the bastard who made my fingers like this!”

The tied up guard shook his head desperately.

“Sheesh...”

Park Joon-shik spat and muttered,

“Obviously he slipped away like a rat. Fuck, I was caught by a real goblin.”

Park Joon-shik recalled the face of that guard with the evil smile.

He punched the guard with his fist. That was the beginning of everything.

Park Joon-shik approached Shin Chang-ho and asked,

“Hyung-nim. What do we do now?”

“Huu...”

Shin Chang-ho sighed as he looked at Park Joon-shik. One of his followers caused such a large incident...

Then the bodyguard next to Shin Chang-ho frowned and interrupted,

“Are you saying that now? Grab a knife and handle it yourself. Don’t rely on Hyung-nim all the time!”

“...I am ashamed. Still, I couldn’t bear it.”

“Do you think it will be fine if you answer like that?!”

It seemed like a fight would break out among his own men. Shin Chang-ho opened his mouth and spoke,

“The dice has already been thrown. At the very least, we need to prepare for those here to have their punishments increased.”

“That is okay. No matter what, going against the guards is too much.”

“If Hyung-nim tells me then I will go to hell for you. It is Hyung-nim’s decision.

Dozens of eyes focused on Shin Chang-ho. Outside, he was part of a big gang but he was just a mere prisoner here. He was limited in what he could do.

At that moment, someone quietly walked up to Shin Chang-ho.

“...Kim Cheol-su?”

“Eh? The cigarette seller?”

Shin Chang-ho's eyes narrowed as he looked at the other person. The brawl had happened in the area where Shin Chang-ho's gang was sitting. Most of them became involved in the fight. But why was this person here? No, since when had he been here?

Tae-hyuk had disguised as a member of Shin Chang-ho's group first. Then he became a guard to persecute the inmates. And now, he was here with Kim Cheol-su's face. The two groups here were dancing on the palms of his hands. All of this was possible with the help of his crime skills.

“You seem to have a lot of concerns.”

Shin Chang-ho bit his lip. A few years later, he would become a high-ranking official of the organization after leaving this place. However, if he accidentally increased his sentence, would the boss wait for him?

However, it wasn't possible to get rid of those who followed Shin Chang-ho. No matter what choice he made, he wouldn't like the results. However, Shin Chang-ho didn't reveal that he was nervous.

“Kuk. Cigarette Seller, you seem to be very busy with your

business. Did you come to this war to sell cigarettes?”

Tae-hyuk laughed and said,

“I don’t know if you remember, but I said that I would cooperate with the war. It is the same again this time.”

“Ha? You are very conscientious. I’m sorry, but what we are dealing with now is the guards, not the Japanese. What you can do to help?”

“First, I will briefly sum up the situation. There are two things making you troubled right now.”

“Hrmm. Speak.”

“First of all, the dining room we occupied is blocked to prevent the inmates from escaping. The key is kept among the guards.”

“I know that much. Isn’t that why we are gathered here like this?”

“You want to finish this incident in a way that doesn’t increase your prison time, but that isn’t easy.”

“.....”

It was the right answer. A small groan escaped from Shin Chang-ho's mouth. Knowing the latter, it meant that Shin Chang-ho's psychology had been completely grasped.

“From now on, I will tell you what to do.”

Shin Chang-ho gulped and looked at Tae-hyuk.

“Those who seek death shall live. Those who seek life shall die.”

“...Admiral Yi Sun-sin's words.”

“You have to make the war bigger in order to survive. I know there is something wrong with the prison ships, which is why the food hasn't been distributed properly.”

“I see. I also thought that. The warden seems to be doing something.”

“This is the way of life. The wardens and guards do a lot of work that isn't publicized, so the warden will choose one of two options: He will either negotiate to cover up his problems, or call for outside support.”

“Hrmm! I would welcome the former with both arms open, but won't we be ruined if it is the latter?”

The word ‘we’ naturally flowed from Shin Chang-ho's mouth.

Tae-hyuk laughed with satisfaction.

“Then we will use the media to expose this incident to the outside world. South Korea is a really good country, so they care about the human rights of prisoners. The prisoners were given only porridge for a week and the guards carried out violence against the prisoners. They will end up squished like rice cakes.”

“.....”

The former option of negotiation would benefit them. The latter option would incite sympathy from the public. Of course, there was a possibility that the result wouldn't turn out good. However, it was possible to decrease the losses caused by the war. It was a sweet offer that was difficult to reject.

Shin Chang-ho said in a heavy tone,

“But there is one big hole in your proposal. Take a look around.”

His companions were armed at best with rough cutlery and cooking knives.

“Earlier, the fight could be won due to the overwhelming difference in firepower; however, once we leave here, dozens of armed guards would be waiting. The plan will only work if we can fight them equally. It is impossible...”

Tae-hyuk quietly pulled out a set of keys. They could leave the

dining room with it.

“...H-How did you get that?”

“I told you. I will cooperate in this war. I will provide the materials.”

“Materials?”

“I got this by chance. There is some very interesting stuff mixed in.”

Tae-hyuk found one key and showed it to Shin Chang-ho.

Shin Chang-ho's eyes widened.

“O-Oh my god! T-That's the weapons warehouse key!”

Dozens of members of Shin Chang-ho's gang gulped. It was possible to become the same as the armed guards with this. Then...

“Now you know what I mean by cooperating.”

Shin Chang-ho nodded quietly.

---

“A-Amazing!”

“Hyung-nim! There are a lot of batons and tear gas canisters in here!”

“Taser guns and gas guns!”

“It is enough to arm all of us!”

Shin Chang-ho watched quietly as his men picked up the things stored in the weapons warehouse. The guard at the entrance had been hit with an iron pipe that Cigarette Seller found somewhere. And he showed them a magic trick where he opened the door that was locked with iris recognition.

“...He truly isn't an ordinary criminal.”

Cigarette Seller was twirling his iron pipe around.

“Do you need any weapons from here?”

“I'm more comfortable with this.”

“The skill with which you handle that is unusual.”

“Thanks for the praise. Anyways, this war can absolutely be won if we drag out the time. Build a fortress inside the prison. But I'm a



bit bored so I've prepared some fun games during that time."

"...Games?"

"First, we will support each other to get what we both want. This won't end with just you guys being armed."

"I see what you mean. I want to show a bitter taste to the Japanese."

"Yes. I would also like you to give me Park Sung-yul in this bargain."

"That isn't hard."

"And after the war, I will let you know where your sister is."

Any laughter on Shin Chang-ho's face disappeared at his words. He remembered what he had forgotten for a moment. Did Cigarette Seller know for certain where she was?

"If I can find my sister with your help, then I will do anything for you. There are many things to be done."

"...If there is nothing else then go."

Tae-hyuk smiled like he knew the ending of the story. His men

finished arming themselves.

Shin Chang-ho took a deep breath and slowly walked forward.

“From now on, we will be at war with the guards. Don’t overdo it, since time is on our side. For our victory!”

The armed prisoners cheered.

It was the signal for the start of the prison war.

# Chapter 114: The Price Of Their Sins #1

---

The dawn of a war didn't mean that there would be an armed conflict. In particular, if the power on both sides was equal, then the standoff would just persist.

Shin Chang-ho, the leader of the prisoners, built his base in the logistics warehouse.

There were a bunch of dangerous items that could be used as weapons. Therefore, the access of the inmates was strictly controlled. Several layers of security had to be passed through to enter it. Without Cigarette Seller's help, they wouldn't have been able to obtain the weapons so easily.

Shin Chang-ho emphasized the most important facts to his men.

“Keep the armed conflict to a minimum. I know that your hearts are heating up, but show some restraint.”

“Yes, I understand.”

If anybody else gave these instructions then complaints would be popping out. However, Shin Chang-ho was the man who reigned over the other inmates with his charisma and future status in the organization. None of the prisoners refused his orders.

A simple barricade was made at the entrance with furniture. The prisoners took up positions behind it as if they were trained

soldiers. It wasn't that difficult since the majority of them had gone to the army. That experience really helped in this situation.

There was a command room in a corner of the dining room. From there, Shin Chang-ho and Seo Tae-hyuk looked at the prisoners working.

“Cigarette Seller. Is this enough?”

“It is very wonderful. The time limit is 72 hours, which is when the guard shift changes. If we hang on until then, victory will be ours.”

“Hrmm...”

Shin Chang-ho gave a low groan. Would it work out as well as planned? However, it was better than doing nothing.

In this place, Tae-hyuk was the criminal Kim Cheol-su. His eyes shone with the madness unique to psychopaths. Even Shin Chang-ho, who had lived in the back alleys for more than a decade, was surprised at how frightening he was.

Tae-hyuk said,

“What are the other inmates doing?”

“Most of them are waiting for this war to end soon and are in

their cells.”

If they exited, then there was a possibility of getting involved. In the end, the prisoners chose to stay in their cells despite the fact that there were no guards watching over them.

“I told you already, but the reason I am cooperating with you is because I need your help.”

“...You want Park Sung-yul to be interrogated for information?”

“That’s right. If you succeed, you will also get what you want.”

Tae-hyuk smiled as he said the meaningful words. Shin Chang-ho nodded. He didn’t know why Cigarette Seller was so hostile to Park Sung-yul. However, he didn’t need to know. He felt sorry for Park Sung-yul, but he had to accept Cigarette Seller’s offer.

“I understand. I know someone who will do a good job.”

Tae-hyuk nodded with a pleased face. After a while, the bandaged Park Joon-shik appeared in front of them.

“I’m sorry but I want you to do something.”

“I’ll do whatever you want Hyung-nim.”

Park Joon-shik wanted to make up for starting the war. However, that opportunity came sooner than he thought.

“Do you know Park Sung-yul?”

“Ah, that gloomy bastard?”

“Yes. There is something I need you to find out from him.”

“What is it?”

“Find out the identities of the people he killed.”

“.....”

Park Joon-shik closed his mouth and a serious expression appeared. It seemed like he required a convincing explanation.

“Of course, it is an unwritten law here not to care about what a person did outside. But there is a personal grudge against him.”

They were short words. Of course, that was enough.

“I understand. I will find out what you want quickly.”

“Yes, thank you.”

Park Joon-shik hit his chest with a confident expression and he disappeared towards the cells. He definitely was a man of great ability.

Tae-hyuk asked from where he was watching on the sidelines.

“I don’t see any special skills in that area.”

“You don’t have to worry. Although Joon-shik looks like that, he is very good at torturing people.”

It was a compliment that wasn’t a compliment. Shin Chang-ho added to emphasize his meaning.

“His skills are enough to work at the NIS.”

“Um, the NIS.”

They were really trustworthy words.

---

Park Sung-yul was quietly resting in his cell. Something was happening outside, but it didn’t have anything to do with him.

How could he improve the puzzles that he had completed? That was the only thing he was concentrating on.

“Ohuhu... The eighth puzzle is really good. I think that Cho Kang-suk will like it a lot.”

Originally, he would've sent his second puzzle by now. However, since last week, all postal services in the prison were suspended. This was the first time it happened but it wasn't a problem. It would be normal anyway. The letter could be sent at any time. Only the police would become frustrated.

Knock knock.

At that moment, someone knocked on the door of his cell and looked inside. It was a single room without a roommate. The person who was looking this way...

Park Sung-yul made a confused sound as he confirmed the identity.

“Park Joon-shik?”

He was one of the people following Shin Chang-ho.

“Oh, there aren't any guards so I was wondering how you got in. The door is open.”

Park Joon-shik smiled as he entered and sat on the bed. Park Sung-yul wanted to get rid of him straight away, but his size was



too large to deal with.

Ching.

Park Joon-shik was holding the scissors used for cutting hair. Park Sung-yul spoke with reluctance,

“What do you want?”

The other person was famous in the prison. But for Park Sung-yul, they were just crows crowding around rotten meat. When compared to himself...

“You are resting so I’m sorry. In fact, I absolutely don’t have any bad feelings towards you.”

Ching.

Park Joon-shik opened and closed the scissors with his fingers in the handle. Every time it opened and closed, there was a distinctive metallic sound.

“Hyung-nim seems interested in you.”

Park Joon-shik was injured, so one arm didn’t move properly. However, one hand was enough to deal with weaklings.

“W-W-What do you want to do?”

Park Sung-yul’s eyes trembled.

“What? Are you afraid? But isn’t it funny? I know you killed a lot of people before coming here.”

Park Joon-shik smiled and aimed the scissors at Park Sung-yul. Blood spurted as a scream burst from Park Sung-yul’s mouth.

“Kuaaack!”

“The people you brutally killed were weaker than you. Now that the situation is the opposite, you are crying out with a very cute voice. Disgusting bastard. But I’m sorry.”

Park Joon-shik placed the opponent’s fingers between the scissors handles and twisted lightly. The bones were twisted and the fingers bend in a strange direction. Park Joon-shik looked at his work with a satisfied expression.

“...I am the same.”

Thus, Park Joon-shik started his one hour torture.

---

“W-What, why...?”

Park Sung-yul's whole body was bloody. It was the first time he learnt that scissors could be used to give pain in many different ways.

“Then this is enough warm up.”

Ching.

Park Sung-yul glared at the other person. Now his legs would weaken every time he heard the sound of the scissors. Park Joon-shik was an expert in torture. It was very simple to dig at the weak parts of the target's psychology. In order to do that, he had to put the other person in an extreme situation without giving reasons for the torture.

“...T-This, the reason...”

Park Sung-yul begged.

However, Park Joon-shik constantly tormented his target. By this time, Park Sung-yul's reaction had weakened.

He realized that it was time to move on. Park Joon-shik placed his fingers in the handle of the scissors.

“In fact, I've only twisted it so far. Aren't scissors used to cut things off? So I should try that out now.”

Park Sung-yul's body trembled.

"D-Don't! I'll do whatever you say..."

"Ah, it doesn't matter. It has been a fun time. By the way, do you know what the basis of torture is?"

"I, don't, know...!"

Park Joon-shik twisted two fingers.

"Work in opposition, and absolutely never kill the opponent. Make it as painful as possible without the person dying. This is surprisingly difficult. Oh, I almost forgot to tell you."

Park Joon-shik brought his mouth to the ears of the trembling Park Sung-yul. Then he whispered,

"I'm sorry but I'm used to cutter knives and needles. This is my first time using scissors, so I might accidentally cut some things off that I shouldn't. I'll ask for your understanding in advance."

"Aaaaacck!"

A pained scream echoed in the cell.

Two hours had passed. Park Joon-shik looked at Park Sung-yul with a satisfied expression.

“Hah. This is a human cultural asset. You can still breathe without being in danger of dying. But won’t it get really dangerous if you don’t receive treatment soon?”

“...K, kuooock, kuooock.”

“If you want to live then answer my questions from now on. Of course, you have the right to refuse. But every time you do, something precious will be cut off one by one.”

Park Joon-shik smiled brightly and winked. And Park Sung-yul realized.

This was the Blue Dragon prison. There was no one normal inside.

---

Tae-hyuk was happily shopping while waiting for Park Joon-shik to gather the information.

There were a variety of tools in the warehouse. Detergent to clean the inside of the prison, and fertilizer to grow drugs on the farms. Furthermore, there were very toxic pesticides to lower the amount of labor the prison would have to mobilize.

Tae-hyuk gathered all of them and checked the note that Kim Tae-sung had given him.

“He can make a bomb using these ingredients. What a great person.”

To make a bomb, various chemicals such as: potassium nitrate, potassium chlorate, ammonium nitrate and sulfuric acid were needed. Most of them were classified as accident-prone goods and were not readily available on the market.

But curiously, most of these things were stored in the warehouse of the Blue Dragon Prison. Of course, they needed to be separated from the fertilizer to be used. He would give the materials to Kim Tae-sung and let him take care of it.

“Isn’t this ammonium nitrate? Is the warden completely crazy?”

It was a chemical that exploded easily when exposed to high temperatures or combustible materials.

“Is this used to make ice packs?”

Summer was coming to Blue Dragon Prison. It would be best if there were air conditioners, but it was hard to expect such products of civilization. Therefore, the prisoners were offered ice packs. It was a necessary medicine.

Tae-hyuk looked around and discovered bleach used to wash the

sweat and dust from the guards' uniforms. Potassium chlorate could be extracted from that. With these materials, a bomb could be created that would blow up one of these rooms.

“If there are more materials, then he'll be able to create an even bigger bomb.”

However, the materials inside the prison were limited. In the first place, a bomb with huge explosive power wasn't necessary.

“It is enough to just have fireworks. The prisoners... No, I will use it as a salute to signify the victory of the prisoners.”

Tae-hyuk laughed and kept collecting the materials that Bomber had written down.

Park Joon-shik would come back soon. Then he could gather everything he needed.

## Chapter 115 – The Price Of Their Sins #2

---

The warden was drinking coffee in his office with a relaxed look.

“...In this situation, I should be a calm commander.”

The warden drank his cold coffee with trembling hands. Although there were some small problems, this was still a prison. In order to access different areas, the prisoners needed to go through serious security.

Currently, the prisoners were occupying the cafeteria. Soon, there would be a strike to suppress them. He muttered like he was trying to reassure someone.

“There is no problem... Just a little trouble. The opponents at best only have a few kitchen knives... If a properly armed squad moves then all of them can be put in solitary confinement.”

Then he looked at the phone on the table. A phone number was showing on it. If he pressed the call button now, then he could ask for support. However, it was something that he absolutely couldn't do. He could lose everything that he had done in the meantime.

“Huu.”

The warden unknowingly sighed. He drank what was left of the coffee and leaned back in his chair.



It was time for his subordinates to report.

Kwang!

At that time, someone opened the door and came rushing in.

“W-Warden-nim!”

The deputy took deep breaths to recover from his run.

“Yes. Have you finished assembling the squad?”

“T-That isn’t the problem right now!”

“What? What other problem has occurred?”

The deputy paused like he was afraid of the warden’s reprimand before speaking.

“The prisoners have occupied another area.”

“What?! No, how is that possible...? This is a prison. They have to go through a lot of security to get to another area! How are those bastards...?”

Depending on the security level, all access to other areas were strictly controlled in Blue Dragon Prison. Even the guards who

managed the prisoners weren't allowed to freely enter unauthorized areas. Now the prisoners had managed to pass through into another area? It didn't make sense.

“...It has been confirmed that the prisoners have escaped from the dining room and have occupied other areas. Maybe an excellent hacker is among them...”

“Is that a joke? Hacker? Are we filming a 007 movie?”

“...I'm sorry.”

The security of Blue Dragon Prison consisted of an access card, iris recognition and password. Even if one was leaked, it was impossible to go to another area because they didn't have the remaining two. But what was this?

The warden rubbed between his brows and suppressed his boiling anger. It had already happened. If he found that it was due to a mistake by a guard then he would severely penalize them later. The most urgent thing was to solve the problem in front of him.

“Yes, I understand. So where are the prisoners now?”

“.....”

The warden's chest tightened as he saw the deputy's face turn darker.

“I won’t be angry at the answer.”

“That, r-right now, warehouse two...”

“F-Fuck! What?”

The warden flipped out within five seconds.

He banged his desk with his fist and shouted,

“...The warehouse was robbed?!”

It truly didn’t make sense. Warehouse Two contained things that the inmates absolutely couldn’t touch. The security level was much higher than anywhere else.

The deputy gulped. Then the words that the warden didn’t want to hear emerged from his mouth.

“Yes, the prisoners have armed themselves with weapons from there. Around 30 people are involved... That is almost identical to the number of guards.”

“Eeeeeeeugh...”

Originally, the warden would’ve tried to compromise to some

degree. If two groups with a similar power engaged in a war, then damages would occur.

But the warden decided not to compromise. His eyes were bloodshot and filled with madness.

“...Deputy. I just came up with a good operation. Stop all ventilation in the prison right now and fill it up with tear gas. It is best to light a fire at the entrance to catch the raccoon hiding in a cave. How is it, my operation?’

“That...”

“What You don’t like it? Then tell me if you have a better idea!”

“I’m sorry, but all the tear gas was kept in Warehouse Two.”

“Kuha!”

In other words, the tear gas was in the hands of the prisoners.

“In the end, we have the disadvantage in firepower.”

“.....”

The deputy nodded without saying anything.

The warden sighed. If the situation was this bad, he should ask for support from the outside, even if it meant revealing his guilt.

However, he couldn't do that. These drugs needed to be delivered to the Triads in China. If this failed...

“Damn!”

In the end, the warden made a choice that should never have been made.

---

Park Joon-shik returned to the control room while twirling the bloody scissors around his fingers.

“Hyung-nim, I've completed what you ordered safely.”

“...Um. You went through a lot of trouble. It took longer than I thought.”

“Ahaha~ I wanted it to be certain.”

Park Joon-shik handed over some notes. Shin Chang-ho skimmed through it.

“Um. The identity of the victims and the killing method. Even the place where the bodies were disposed... it is all here. Well

done.”

“Thank you. There were 14 people so it was hard to write it all down.”

“14 people... I knew he was crazy, but this is a little much.”

Shin Chang-ho smacked his lips together.

Park Joon-shik had written down the memoir of a serial killer. He didn't know why Cigarette Seller wanted this but he was very interested. Shin Chang-ho licked his lips and moved his gaze to the notebook.

“Let's see who the poor people were. The first victim was the daughter of his boarding house owner who he had a grudge against. And...”

Kwang!

All of a sudden the door, the door of the warehouse opened and an agitated person ran in. Shin Chang-ho put the notebook away in a drawer. Although he was curious about the contents, that wasn't important right now. He waited for the report of this subordinate as calmly as possible.

“Hyung-nim! There is a problem!”

“What?”

“I think the warden has gone crazy. He is preparing for an all-out war.”

“Hah... Crazy... Does he want to die together? It is the worst choice.”

Shin Chang-ho had been a prisoner here for a few years. In addition, there were those who were well-versed in the environment of Blue Dragon Prison.

“Right now, there are only 30 guards on duty... We have an advantage just looking at power. Moreover, there is the information that the Cigarette Seller passed on.”

The prisoners didn't lack anything compared to the guards.

Shouldn't the warden be preparing for negotiations rather than war? It was like pouring oil on a fire.

“...After one or two armed conflicts, the war will return to a lull again. Then the situation will be on our side...”

At that moment, his subordinate interrupted him.

“That isn't all. The warden has brought the Chinese inmates to his side. There are at least 60 of them!”

“Fuck! He must be crazy!”

Shin Chang-ho’s eyes widened.

He tried to stay as calm as possible, but he couldn’t do that. The warden was making a gamble. The prisoners had robbed a warehouse so now he was arming prisoners to fight on his behalf? There would be massive repercussions if this leaked out.

Shin Chang-ho’s hands trembled. Even if the armed forces were the same, there was a difference in power due to the participation of the Chinese people. Even Yi Sun-sin, who led a legendary victory in the Japanese invasion, wouldn’t be able to win.

“Really?”

“Yes, I saw it with my own eyes.”

“Damn...”

Shin Chang-ho’s brain moved quickly. There was no time to hesitate. No matter who won, both the prisoners and guards would be left with huge wounds.

“...Should I bring in other prisoners?”

Apart from the prisoners who followed Shin Chang-ho, a massive



number of criminals were imprisoned in Blue Dragon Prison. If he joined hands with them to fight the Chinese inmates...

“...No. There are no benefits we can give them to fight with us. Damn. Is this the end? I’m guessing there will be at least three years added...”

Time passed by without a solution. Then a prisoner standing outside screamed.

“There is a group of armed prisoners on the drill grounds! It seems like this area is their goal!”

Shin Chang-ho muttered with a desperate expression.

“The guards and prisoners are holding hands so it is impossible to cope with out power alone... Hah! We can’t even fight properly...”

The prison war created by the sausage seemed to end with the defeat of the prisoners. However, just like in any war, there was always a reversal.

“Well, should I prevent that guy from entering here?”

“Cigarette Seller?”

He appeared in front of Shin Chang-ho after completely

disappearing. Tae-hyuk smiled and pulled out a cigarette from his pocket.

“If you tell me an interesting story, then I will sell it. Oh, the fire will be a bonus along with the cigarette.”

“.....?”

Shin Chang-ho gulped and looked at Tae-hyuk. His words didn't make sense.

“For reference, don't use anything like a lighter. If you're a man then you should use this.”

Tae-hyuk indicated to the large plastic case next to him. Inside there were several cans, electrical wires and plastic bags with liquid.

“What is this?”

“What, this? A bomb.”

---

“Wind up this wristwatch and the bomb will explode after 30 seconds. Turning it off is impossible, so please avoid doing so unless you're absolutely sure.”

“What is the blast force?”

“I don’t know exactly, but it can blow away this area.”

Shin Chang-ho gulped and looked at Tae-hyuk. It was a bomb that would deal considerable damage. He couldn’t miss even the smallest of information.

“The allied forces will start soon. The installation of the bomb shouldn’t be too late.”

“...Then I will ask you one last thing. Is this safe?”

“Let’s see?”

If they installed the bomb incorrectly, then they would die. The prisoners standing nearby gulped as they heard the conversation between the two. Of course, if they were ordered to install the bomb then they would do so. However, they didn’t want to do it.

Shin Chang-ho opened his mouth like he read the atmosphere.

“You guys. I’m sorry but I don’t want to concede such a wonderful role. I will install the bomb.”

“H-Hyung-nim!”

“Boss!”

Tae-hyuk ignored the people filming a noir movie in real-time and quietly escaped. Shin Chang-ho would use the bomb to buy time. Meanwhile, he had other work to do.

“...I’m so busy that there should be two of me.”

Tae-hyuk used Spying to confirm that no one was nearby before using Disguise. If he looked in the mirror, then he would be the perfect image of the warden. It was simple to change the clothes he was wearing using Counterfeit.

“I’m sorry, but I really don’t care which side wins. I just wanted the warden to come out of his cage.”

Upon arriving at the room, the deputy greeted him in a loud voice.

“W-Warden-nim! Didn’t you leave? Why are you suddenly...?”

“I forgot something.”

“Ah, is that so? Then keep up the good work!”

Tae-hyuk nodded and went inside. There was a phone on the table.

“Hoh, the warden must’ve had a lot of thoughts. Is that the number?”

Tae-hyuk’s purpose.

He was going to shatter the Blue Dragon Prison itself.

# Chapter 116 – The Price Of Their Sins #3

---

Joo Hyun-ho leaned back in a chair that was so comfortable that it felt like his bed.

“It has been one month since he entered jail.”

Cho Kang-suk replied from the built in cabinet of the investigation headquarters.

“Has it already been that long? Time really goes by quickly.”

“We were able to find many of the victims that Park Sung-yul killed. Still, isn’t there something lacking? I feel like he is acting less compared to Phantom of the past.”

“Well, that is certainly true but... Isn’t it for the best if we can solve the case without any problems?”

“Still, it would be interesting if there was something bigger...”

He sounded like a child with a toy that had been taken away. Hyun-ho had expected to solve the puzzles first, so it was natural that he was disappointed.

“Hey! It is our fault if something blows up!”

“I suppose I just don’t care?”

“Aigoo! As expected of a building owner!”

Kang-suk talked lightly like it was a joke, but he was actually serious. If anything went wrong, then he was prepared to take all responsibility and resign. Kang-suk felt a strange responsibility towards Park Sung-yul who he arrested. If he had acted better during the interrogation then he could've discovered that Park Sung-yul was a serial killer.

Kang-suk bit his lip and muttered,

“Phantom, make sure that Park Sung-yul pays for all the sins he committed.”

Hyun-ho raised a thumb at Kang-suk's serious expression.

“Ohh. Sunbae, you look like a detective in a drama.”

“Not a detective in a drama but one in reality.”

Kang-suk decided to give his junior a headlock.

“W-Wait a minute! Stop it! Sunbae, look at the breaking news right now!”

“Who would believe such lies?”

“It is real! H-Here!”

Hyun-ho, who had been watching the Internet news, raised his phone before Kang-suk’s eyes.

Kang-suk released his arm and focused on the phone screen.

“...Bio-business that emerged as the next generation growth engine... I don’t think this is it. Controversy over Sungjin Group again... Not it either...”

“Not there, the society side!”

Hyun-ho enlarged the screen when Kang-suk couldn’t find it.

“Ah, here. Ack what is this?”

[Prisoners are bombers? What is happening on Prison Island?]

The article was half speculative and didn’t talk about the incident occurring. However, Kang-suk sensed that something was happening just from that sentence.

“What the hell are you doingggg! Phaaaantooooom!!!”

Kang-suk screamed with an agonizing expression.



“G-Great! This is Phantom! Uhaha! Sunbae! Isn’t it very interesting?”

The grinning Hyun-ho raised a thumb. The reactions of the two people were completely the opposite.

---

Tae-hyuk experienced his biggest victory at the Death Circus. There were many cheaters there that made him feel challenged. When he thought about that time, the people that he was dealing with now felt like children.

First of all, he imitated the warden’s voice and asked for support.

“Yes. The inmates have made a bomb... it isn’t a toy. It has enough power to blow away at least one floor of the building. The damage to the guards isn’t great yet, but just in case...”

Tae-hyuk made it seem like an atomic bomb had been made of crude materials obtained in the prison.

–U-Understood. I’ll make sure someone gets out to you as quickly as possible.

He could tell that the voice of the other person on the phone was shaking.

The bait was eaten!

Tae-hyuk laughed.

After sending the request for support, Tae-hyuk leaked information to several news organizations about the incident. Shin Se-ho would do a good job, but Phantom couldn't appear in this case. This had to be an incident occurring due to Blue Dragon Prison.

After all the calls were finished, Tae-hyuk quietly put down the phone.

“All of the actors are now gathered. Brown Bear should launch the fireworks for the new audience.

---

At the same time, Shin Chang-ho was setting up the bomb in a passage that led outside.

“Damn. This is a real bomb so I'm pretty nervous...”

This would buy time to slow down the enemy's entry. There was just one bomb but the opponents didn't know that. Once they saw the havoc of one bomb, who could easily enter?

They were Chinese inmates who were ordered to fight. Once they realized that their lives were in danger, they wouldn't move as the

warden commanded.

“The road to victory has finally opened.”

Shin Chang-ho laid the bomb on the flat ground with trembling hands and took out two bags, making sure to mix the contents well. A stain spread like a green liquid was sprinkled inside and it quickly turned purple.

“...It is complete. Now the wristwatch that will act as the primer...”

He turned a knob twice and the stopped clock needle starting moving again.

“The next 30 seconds!”

Shin Chang-ho bolted back to the command room. His head had turned white and he couldn't think of anything else. It was a dangerous job with the risk of serious injuries if something went wrong.

First, he had to know when exactly the bomb was going to explode. Shin Chang-ho slowly counted in his head.

One, two...

“...29... 30...!”

Shin Chang-ho fell to the ground while running. He was a bit hasty. It took a few more seconds to reach 30 and then the bomb went off.

Kukukukung!

“.....!”

Even though he had ran to almost the end of the corridor, he could still feel the vibration of the explosion in the air. Shin Chang-ho spat out the dust that filled his mouth and muttered.

“This is a weak bomb? Just a bit more and the whole prison would be gone!”

However, there was a bright smile on his face. The image of his little sister, Shin Seo-yeon appeared in his mind. Despite not seeing her for several years, he was able to vividly recall her features.

“...Yes. I did everything that Cigarette Seller asked, and now I can hear where Seo-yeon is.”

That was clearly the terms of the agreement. Of course, he didn't believe everything that Cigarette Seller said. But he showed an unbelievable ability. So he really might know where Seo-yeon was.

“Yes. Once I find out, will I be able to call her after a long time? Then I will apologize for living as a fool. Will Seo-yeon laugh and forgive me?”

Then he would once again ask her to wait. Shin Chang-ho laughed as he thought of his sister. He was the man called Brown Bear and an object of terror. However, he was only a cute baby bear in front of the girl he liked.

“Well, I have to return to the command room first.”

He got up and brushed off the dust on his body. He erased the appearance of Shin Seo-yeon in his head and returned to his usual appearance.

Once he returned, his men greeted him with excited faces.

“Hyung-nim! Brown Bear did great!”

“Is this really Hyung-nim?”

“Amazing!”

“Boss! We will take care of those bastards!”

Shin Chang-ho asked his excited subordinates.

“What happened to the enemies?”

“They were going to enter but fled once the bomb exploded.”

“I see. I wonder what the warden looks like now?”

Shin Chang-ho sighed with relief.

The operation was a success. The enemies were less likely to enter due to potential bombs being installed. If so, they just needed to wait here for the rest of the time.

Shin Chang-ho turned and looked for the Cigarette Seller. He was sitting in a chair and looking at the prisoners with cold eyes.

“Cigarette Seller. I’ve done everything you said. As promised, tell me where my sister is right now.”

“Didn’t I already give it to you?”

“What?”

Something was strange. Cigarette Seller had only given him the bomb. However, he didn’t seem like the type to lie in such an obvious manner. Then did he receive something without knowing it?

Seo-yeon's voice was suddenly heard in Shin Chang-ho's ears.

-I waited 10 years. Seven years isn't long.

As if to erase it, Cigarette Seller said,

"You can't forget this important thing. Here it is."

Tae-hyuk opened the drawer of the table where he was sitting and threw a bunch of papers at Shin Chang-ho. Shin Chang-ho received it with a bemused expression. It was the crime notes that Park Joon-shik had obtained after torturing Park Sung-yul.

Then Shin Chang-ho remembered his words.

-If you succeed, you will also get what you want.

"This, this thing, it is what I want?"

He recalled everything he knew about Park Sung-yul. A bastard who brutally murdered a weak woman who couldn't fight back and was caught trying to get rid of the body. He would tremble whenever he encountered someone in the restaurant or yard. A typical type of person who was weak against the strong, and strong against the weak.

Now his crime records were in front of Shin Chang-ho. He turned the pages as if he was spellbound. He passed through many people

before finding his lover that his subordinates couldn't find.

[13th Puzzle – Shin Seo-yeon]

Yes. I'll tell you. I'll speak!

She was someone I accidentally met.

I was upset and riding on a city bus.

I got to the end point. It was a beach town...

There was a woman with a sweet atmosphere sitting by the waterfront. I noticed she was crying and went and sat down next to her.

However, she wasn't sad. No, she looked delighted. It was like she received a proposal from someone she liked.

Why, yes that's it.

So she was crying happy tears. Her crying resonated with me. She looked so beautiful...

I threw the knife I was holding without knowing it.



I got her name from her ID card. She was older than she looked. I thought she was only 20...

Oh, please remove the scissors.

I'll talk!

I understand. I'll tell you simply.

The body is...

The report continued but Shin Chang-ho was unable to read it anymore. He was so furious that everything turned red.

"H-Hyung-nim, what is it?"

"...Where is Park Sung-yul?"

"Why are you looking for Park Sung-yul?"

"I will kill him."

Shin Chang-ho no longer cared about winning this war.

Kill Park Sung-yul.

He seemed to be alive just for this.

# Chapter 117 – The Price Of Their Sins #4

---

“Fuck, give me some medicine...”

Park Joon-shik was kind enough to take Park Sung-yul to the infirmary. Blue Dragon Prison was a large correctional facility for hundreds of people. In such places, certain facilities and staff like medical officers were mandatory. However, doctors were unlikely to work in prisons on remote islands.

In the end, there was only one primary doctor working. There were no nurses.

The only doctor here said,

“Fortunately, no dangerous areas were hurt. However, I will tell the warden that you need to be hospitalized for a period of time.

Park Sung-yul nodded.

“I understand. Then Doctor, do you know why the prison is so loud right now?”

“It feels like an explosion. At first, I was nervous because I thought patients would come flocking. But you are the first visitor. If so, hadn’t it ended without any casualties? Ah, I have to stitch this up so stop moving. Stay put.”

Park Sung-yul looked around at the doctor's words. Certainly, he was the only patient in here.

A war was taking place between the prisoners and guards. Even if there were no guns, it was strange that not a single person came here. It meant there was no armed conflict between the two groups. Maybe it was related to the explosion just before...

"Ah, I don't know. No matter how crazy they are, would the rebels hit this place? Ugh... Worrying about it unnecessarily just hurt my wounds. I'm sorry Doctor. Can I have a painkiller?"

"Yes, wait a moment."

The doctor injected a painkiller into Park Sung-yul's arm after he complained of pain. Then Park Sung-yul could breathe more easily.

Park Sung-yul leaned back on the bed and thought about the future. Why did a subordinate of Shin Chang-ho torture him? In the end, he had to confess everything because he was in such pain.

"...Damn, he won't tell the police right?"

That would undo all the work he put into creating the puzzles. Park Sung-yul was worried about more than just his body. He gained a sense of superiority and conquest from killing someone. It was an exhilarating pleasure that couldn't be explained in words.

He couldn't feel that anymore thanks to one detective. He felt like a young child who had his toy stolen.

“But I found something new.”

It was the puzzles. He was moderately smart. With the exception of the 14th murder, he had killed 13 people without the world knowing. He would make them into puzzles and present them to the detective who caught him. That was the beginning of the murder puzzle.

Park Sung-yul would become the man controlling the detectives from the darkness. He was different from others. He was playing a game with the police while locked in prison. Just thinking about that gave him a sense of superiority and conquest.

Park Sung-yul suddenly laughed. He didn't feel any pain anymore, whether it was due to the medicine, or his thoughts.

He didn't know why the enemy struck. If he had known, then he wouldn't have begged in such a way.

“Park Joon-shik will regret making me his enemy. I am someone who is playing the country's detectives...”

At that time, the door opened and a group of criminals entered.

“Hey, Park Sung-yul! It has been a while.”

He spoke in a friendly tone.

“P-Park Joon-shik?”

“I’m sorry if you were resting, but I have someone who wants to meet you.”

The doctor paled as dozens of armed gangsters entered the room. Then Park Joon-shik gestured to one of the henchmen.

“Ah Doctor, you should rest outside for a while. I need to talk to him for a while.”

“Yes, yes.”

“Take it easy outside. Have something like a cup of coffee from the vending machine.”

“Yes!”

Two of the henchmen grabbed the doctor’s arms and dragged him out.

“Hyung-nim! It is ready.”

“Yes.”

Shin Chang-ho entered the room with a nonchalant expression. It was the calm just before a volcano exploded. Shin Chang-ho arrived at the bed where Park Sung-yul was lying and pulled out some papers.

“Let me ask you one thing. Is everything written here true?”

Park Sung-yul nodded with an expression like he now understood.

“I guess Shin Chang-ho is also interested in my puzzles. If you promise not to tell the police, then I will happily let you enjoy my puzzles. How about it?”

Then Park Joon-shik cried out,

“This bastard! Who are you trying to bargain with?!”

“Joon-shik. Stay still for a while. I’ll finish this.”

“...Yes, I understand.”

Shin Chang-ho looked at Park Sung-yul with cold eyes.

“Of course I won’t tell the police. So answer me, everything in here is true?”

Park Sung-yul answered with a brighter expression.

“Haha. Of course. Well, you seem to like the story. If you want more details then I will tell you... Keok!”

However, Park Sung-yul couldn't say anything else. Shin Chang-ho grabbed Park Sung-yul's mouth with a big hand and muttered,

“Yes. Is that so? Ah, don't worry. I really won't say anything to the police. It is natural, since I don't have the hobby of talking about people I kill, unlike you.”

“Oof! Ooo, ooff!”

Park Sung-yul's eyes shook. The situation didn't make sense.

“Joon-shik. Give me the scissors from earlier.”

“Yes, Hyung-nim.”

“I need to dig out his eyeballs.”

“Oooooof!”

“It is a shame. Are you wondering why I am acting like this?”



“Kkuck!”

Shin Chang-ho moved his face closer to Park Sung-yul. Then he whispered in the other person’s ear.

“This person, who you killed and proudly wrote about, was my younger sister.”

Shin Chang-ho showed Park Sung-yul the page about the 13th victim.

“.....!”

Despair filled Park Sung-yul’s eyes as he understood the whole situation. He ended up making the family of a woman he killed. The person also ended up being the leader of gangsters.

This nonsense...!

Park Sung-yul shrieked in his head. He felt his own death.

Shin Chang-ho inserted strength in the hand holding the scissors. His sister and lover... No, he would make the one who killed his only family pay.

“Goodbye, Park Sung-yul.”

Bam!

There was a blunt shock the moment Shin Chang-ho raised his scissors into the air.

“What, this isn’t in the contract, Cigarette Seller.”

Shin Chang-ho looked at Tae-hyuk, who suddenly appeared, with cold eyes. The other person was holding a deformed metal pipe.

“This bastard! Where did he come from?”

“I’m sorry Hyung-nim! That bastard just suddenly moved!”

They screamed as Tae-hyuk abruptly appeared in the room. Tae-hyuk placed the iron pipe on his shoulder and spoke with a relaxed expression.

“Shin Chang-ho. Cool down a little bit.”

“What? Don’t tell me you want this bastard to live?”

“That isn’t it, but don’t you think it is a little too much to kill him?”

“What?!”

Tae-hyuk didn't shrink away from the dozens of people with weapons in front of him. It was like he was confident that he could fight against all of them.

“Kill him right here. Then what would happen? The bomb is excusable once the war with the prison guards is known to the press. However, it isn't the same when killing an inmate to resolve a grudge. This will certainly increase your sentence.”

“...It doesn't matter. Any reason I have to get out is gone.”

“Really? Even if she is died, don't you want to keep your promise to her?”

At that moment, the last promise that Shin Chang-ho shared with Shin Seo-yeon came to his mind.

-Just wait seven years. Then a ring and flowers...

Shin Chang-ho gritted his teeth.

“...Do you mean that she is waiting for this promise even though she is dead?”

“Yes. At least, if I were her.”

Tae-hyuk's words rippled through Shin Chang-ho's heart.

“.....”

The woman who had waited a lifetime for him. Was she still waiting even after death? Tears flowed from Shin Chang-ho's eyes.

“Yes...promise...I will keep it.”

Park Sung-yul, who almost died, spoke with a relieved expression.

“...Kim Cheol-su, thank you. I'm alive thanks to you.”

Tae-hyuk laughed at Park Sung-yul.

“Yes, you are alive. You are alive to pay for what you have done.”

“What?”

Tae-hyuk approached the bemused Shin Chang-ho.

“You still have three years left in prison. Are you a regular person in here? Then let your opponent know. The price of the sins he committed.”

“Kuhu, kuhuhuhu. The price of his sins? That's right. I know the meaning of your words now.”

“I’m glad that you understand.”

Shin Chang-ho’s eyes came back to life. If he killed Park Sung-yul, then Shin Chang-ho would receive all of the sins. But besides killing, there were lots of ways to torment Park Sung-yul. Shin Chang-ho came up to Park Sung-yul and whispered.

“Over the next three years. I will let you know what the price of your sins are. Don’t worry, I have a lot of skilled men. Isn’t that right? Joon-shik.”

“Yes, Hyung-nim.”

“Aaaaaaack!”

Park Sung-yul’s face filled with despair. Then he shifted his gaze.

Kim Cheol-su smirked at him.

Ah—

Park Sung-yul realized who the true puppet master in this place was.

---

‘What the hell is going on?!’

The warden shouted at the armed guards and Chinese inmates standing in front of him. All of a sudden, the passage leading to the place where the prisoners were gathered had exploded. It was a bomb that had dealt considerable damage. He didn't know where they got it from. But the warden couldn't move hastily until he knew how many bombs were left.

“Damn...!”

If this continued, then the incident would leak. Investigators would come flocking. The traces of drug smuggling that he hadn't disposed of would be revealed.

“...We have to take out all of the prisoners right now!”

Then the doctor in charge of the infirmary came running.

“W-Warden-nim! It is serious! Armed prisoners have attacked the infirmary...!”

“What, the infirmary?!”

The infirmary was far away from the passage where the bomb exploded.

“Yes! There are around 30 of them!”

“Oh my god! That is almost all their power! God has helped me! If

I can grab all the prisoners in the infirmary right now then this case can quietly...”

The light of hope appeared in the warden’s eyes. But that didn’t last for even 10 seconds.

“Warden-nim! Did you send a request for support?”

The deputy, who had been guarding the warden’s room, came running.

“What nonsense is this? Why would I do such a thing?”

He needed to keep this incident inside the prison at all cost. Calling external support was just committing suicide.

“The counterterrorism team received Warden-nim’s request for support and have arrived at the port by seaplane...”

“W-What...?”

The warden ran forward with a blank expression. He opened a window and looked out at the shoreline. The deputy’s words were true.

“I-I never sent a request for support!”

The warden howled.

Thanks to the support of the soldiers, the war inside the prison ended simply. Investigators came to investigate the cause of the incident and found the drug farms.

The warden paid for his own sins.

---

It had been a week since the end of the prison war.

“This is the end of Blue Dragon Prison.”

The incident couldn't be blocked and spread through the Internet media at a tremendous pace. It was all Tae-hyuk's work.

The cruel acts of the guards and the war of the prisoners against it. It caused a lot of controversy and talk on the Internet forums. In the end, the warden was arrested for growing drugs, drug smuggling, abuse of prisoners by the guards, and assisting in murder.

Shin Chang-ho and his group didn't suffer severe punishment because the public opinion was on their side. Of course, the fact that no one was hurt also played a role. In the end, all of them were just punished with a month of solitary confinement.

Tae-hyuk lay on the bed in his cell and smiled.



Two years later, Shin Chang-ho would've found out that Park Sung-yul killed his sister. It was the day after all of Park Sung-yul's puzzles were solved by the police. In the end, Shin Chang-ho brutally killed Park Sung-yul.

He staged it as a suicide. The investigation didn't last long. Shin Chang-ho's men had firmly closed their mouths so the case seemed to be closed. However, the truth of the incident was revealed due to the intervention of a genius investigator.

In the end, Shin Chang-ho's seven year sentence was increased to 15 years. During the extra eight years of imprisonment, Shin Chang-ho became Tae-hyuk's mentor.

"With this, the relationship between Shin Chang-ho and Seo Tae-hyuk is gone. Now it exists only in my memories."

Tae-hyuk licked his lips.

Today, the closure of the Blue Dragon Prison was finally decided. In 10 days, the prisoners here would be distributed across prisons throughout the country.

Quite ironically, Shin Chang-ho's gang was sent to the same prison as Park Sung-yul.

The Chinese inmates would be sent back to China. They had grown drugs, so no one knew what type of ending they would

have.

At night, Tae-hyuk rose from his bed. He used the last remaining sleeping pills to send Yoo Cheol-ho to sleep.

“Then the game will start now. Let’s find the gold and perfectly change my destiny.”

The remaining period was three days.

Everything had to be finished during that time.

# Chapter 118 – Prelude To The Mafia Game

---

“Prison transfer?”

Yoo Cheol-ho sat on the bunk bed and looked up at the ceiling with a blank expression. He looked like a person who just lost his country. He had planned a successful escape from Blue Dragon Prison, an impregnable fortress. In preparation for it, he dug a mole tunnel in his cell. But he wouldn't be able to use it properly before he was transferred. It was enough to drive Yoo Cheol-ho crazy.

Tae-hyuk laughed as he listened to Yoo Cheol-ho's groaning.

‘He completely looks like a dead dog.’

For a month, he had used a variety of methods to put Yoo Cheol-ho to sleep, but this was the last time. Tae-hyuk rustled through his pockets and pulled out a pack of cigarettes.

Then he heard Yoo Cheol-ho grumbling from the top bunk.

“The guards are now busy being investigated.”

“Do you want one?”

“Sheesh. Is this hush money? I'll take it.”

Thick arms protruded from the blanket and snatched the cigarette from Tae-hyuk's hand before disappearing.

“You have been easily silenced in the meantime.”

“What are you talking about?”

“Just talking to myself.”

Tae-hyuk shut up as Yoo Cheol-ho raised the cigarette to his mouth. It was just one cigarette, not a pack.

“Huhuhu... I should smell this cigarette for a while.

Yoo Cheol-ho muttered as he brought the cigarette to his nose. Then he literally collapsed on the bed. Tae-hyuk quietly left his bed and looked at Yoo Cheol-ho who collapsed on the top bunk. He hit Yoo Cheol-ho's cheeks a few times to see if he was really unconscious.

“.....”

“Hrmm. Isn't this effect amazing?”

Tae-hyuk had turned the sleeping pills into powdered form and put them on the tobacco. It was absorbed in the body by putting it in the mouth or by smelling it. Eating it would make the affected person fall into a deep sleep within five minutes. If absorbed

through the nasal mucosa, it wasn't uncommon to fall asleep within five seconds.

“Then the game will start now. Let's find the gold and perfectly change my destiny.”

Blue Dragon Prison was built on a naval base built during the Japanese colonial period. No one would imagine that an enormous amount of gold would be buried there. This fact was discovered by chance during the prison renovations. Of course, the entire amount to the treasury and the reporters had only guessed the amount of money.

“But there will be no construction now.”

Tae-hyuk had changed the future by creating the prison war.

“Then there won't be anyone who discovers it.”

Blue Dragon Prison would be shut down in 10 days and would receive a special administration. Then excavators would be brought in and the gold would be dug up. If someone tried to block him then he could use the crime skills to take care of them.

“But things are going too well.”

Even if the warden was growing drugs and a bomb exploded, did the prison itself have to be removed? Once he started to question it, there would be many uncertainties. No, in the first place, the

existence of Blue Dragon Prison itself was a strange place.

“...First of all, I should check if the gold is there.”

Tae-hyuk left his cell and quietly headed for the drug farm where the gold was buried. The location was a very remote place inside the prison. At present, most of the guards were under investigation. In the end, the number of patrols could be countered on one hand.

‘But what are those people?’

In order to get to the drug farm, he had to pass through the area where the Japanese inmates were gathered. However, even though curfew had passed, a bunch of people were making noises in the corridor. They weren’t guards or investigators.

Tae-hyuk hid his body and listened to their conversation.

“Oyabun. I didn’t think the warden would be caught like this.”

“Yes. He dared to make a deal with the Chinese.”

“But I’m glad we were able to obtain it safely. With this, most of the gold left behind by Shogun Takeda will belong to our family.”

“Huhuhu... There might still be some left, but the situation isn’t good. Prepare to withdraw as soon as possible.”

“Hayah!”

The unidentified group disappeared into the darkness.

Tae-hyuk took a deep breath.

They already dug up all the gold? If their words were correct, then he was too late. Anyway, he noticed that the warden had made a deal with the Chinese as well as the Japanese inmates.

“I’m not the only one trying to get the gold.”

He needed to check this.

---

Tae-hyuk changed his destination. There was nothing to check where the metal was buried. It wasn’t like a treasure chest buried one or two levels down. There were at least a few hundred kilograms. It was to the extent that one or two people would be able to dig it up all.

It felt like he acquired one more piece of the puzzle. The warden, who knew everything, was under investigation. However, there would certainly be evidence left behind in his office. Tae-hyuk secretly entered the room.

“...There is definitely something in here.”

He guessed that the warden and the Japanese inmates were doing something. They were business partners, not prisoners. He didn't see the deputy who was always guarding the entrance. If so, he could search without having to worry.

First of all, he picked up a suitable piece of paper from the table. Tae-hyuk grasped a pen and triggered a crime skill.

“Spying.”

Then he drew the structure of the warden's office using Forgery.

“Hrmm...”

As he guessed, there was a hidden space in the room. It was behind the picture in the corner.

“...He hid it in a place likely to appear in movies.”

Tae-hyuk clicked his tongue and pulled the picture off the wall. There didn't seem to be a lot of cleaning, but the picture contained no dust at all.

“Let's see.”



He could see that there was a space behind the wall. As he pressed an area to open it, a wooden board opened and a safe recessed in the wall was revealed.

“Can this be opened with a fingerprint? Eh? It needs the iris as well?”

Usually, most safes only contained a dial. The security on this indicated that something very important was kept here. The safe was completely sealed with cement so it couldn't be forcibly removed. In order to check the contents, the owner's fingerprints and eyes were needed.

Tae-hyuk licked his lips.

“Why are there such cutting edge crime prevention devices in the prison?”

The material of the safe was made of a metal alloy that wouldn't break even if a bomb exploded next to it. If he didn't open the lock, then he would never be able to remove the contents. But he had already opened the weapons warehouse.

“Do it at once. Disguise! Counterfeit!”

Once Disguise was activated, Tae-hyuk's face became the warden's. He used Counterfeit to change the fingerprints on his fingers. After placing his thumb on the fingerprint reader and his eyes in front of the camera, the safe door opened with a rattling

sound. Apart from the warden, only Tae-hyuk would be able to open this so easily.

“Now, let’s see what is in here.”

The vault contained 10 bundles of \$100 bills and a gun loaded with bullets. There was also a bunch of documents.

“Whoa. \$100,000? It must be his escape fund. Eh? This...”

Once he took out the paperwork, a small envelope fell to the floor. It was filled with white powder.

“...It isn’t sugar. Right?”

Tae-hyuk decided to check the contents of the documents first. The information contained there was amazing. In order to operate the drug factory, he bribed various officials and wrote down the details of numerous corruption scandals. But this wasn’t the end.

Even if the warden had the power of a king, it was only inside the prison. The warden also made deals with the Chinese and Japanese criminals. It meant there was a link connecting them.

“Mister Park...”

Tae-hyuk muttered the name of a man who was mentioned several times in the papers. Mister Park made the drug farm for the

warden who wanted to earn big money. In return, he wanted certain people to infiltrate this place as prisoners. He also forged all the the necessary documents.

“What? If this is real, isn’t the warden simply his puppet?”

Anyway, the warden seemed to know nothing about the gold. Mister Park’s purpose was clear: Shogun Takeda’s gold. And according to the man called ‘Oyabun’, the plan was already successful.

Tae-hyuk took all the items inside the safe and exited.

---

“Hey, Nakada.”

Tae-hyuk slapped the cheeks of one of the sleeping Japanese inmates.

Nakada woke up with a small groan. The Japanese inmates received facilities that were different from other places. It seemed more like a motel or hotel.

Tae-hyuk licked his lips and stared into his opponent’s eyes.

“Bastard. Who dares interrupt my sleep!”

“I am a Korean bimbimbap, not Japanese bastard.”

“Huhu... I’ve been in Korea for a year and I don’t know...”

Tae-hyuk smiled and aimed the gun at the other person.

“...Hiik! What?”

“Good evening. Nakada. I have come to ask you a few things.”

“You! Big Brother?!” (Japanese)

Nakada felt wide awake as he stared at Tae-hyuk.

“I don’t understand what you are trying to say.”

“Why is the killer from the Triads here! Besides, didn’t you die in South Korea?”

It seemed like the other person knew the face of the strongest killer in the Triads.

‘I picked a good disguise.’

“Tell me what you are doing here. Otherwise, you will become very sick.”

“I’d rather die! I won’t betray Oyabun!”

“Really? Don’t the Japanese samurai disembowel themselves when committing suicide? Is it called harakiri? Is it to preserve the Japanese honor?”

“.....”

Tae-hyuk gagged Nakada. Then he took a knife obtained from the kitchen and placed it against Nakada’s belly. He cut from left to right and his stomach came out.

“Do you want to touch it? Being able to touch your internal organs isn’t something that just anyone can experience.”

“Oooooof...!”

“Ah. I don’t think I will be able to eat soondae for the rest of my life. Now, Cancel Illegal Surgery.’

Then Nakada’s belly returned to normal like time had reversed.

“Kuoooooh!”

Nakada’s eyes widened in shock.

“Apart from suicide from disembowelment, don’t you get your fingers cut off if you make a mistake?”

Tae-hyuk placed Nakada’s palm on the prepared board. Then he swung the knife.

Kwajik.

Three of Nakada’s fingers were cut off and fell to the floor.

“Kuooooook!”

Nakada couldn’t even scream properly.

“But isn’t it strange? How are you not hurt at all?”

“Oooooof!”

Nakada desperately stared at Tae-hyuk.

“And voila! Like magic! Your cut off fingers are now restored!”

“.....”

Nakada felt like he was possessed. A dead killer was smiling in front of him. His guts had spilled out, only to go back inside. His fingers were cut off and then put back on again. How the hell could

he dispel this?

“There is one way for this to be possible. The correct answer...”

“.....”

“...All of this is a dream.”

Tae-hyuk laughed and took off Nakada's gag. He continued speaking.

“Think about it. It is strange. I am clearly dead. Isn't that right? Yet here I am torturing you. This is a dream.”

“Dream?’ (Japanese).

“Yes. It isn't real. So why do you have to remain loyal in a dream?’

“Yes, definitely...” (Japanese)

“Why don't you tell me? What are you doing here?”

“That...”

Nakada hesitated for a moment before slowly opening his mouth.

## Chapter 119 – Prelude To The Mafia Game #2

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The Takeda family had accumulated wealth through war for a long time. After Japan's defeat was confirmed, they tried to somehow hide their assets, done through a variety of routes. The majority failed to be recovered.

The descendants of the Takeda family were still wandering the world trying to find it. They gathered together and created the Yakuza group, Kuryu-kai.

Nakada revealed things that he shouldn't have, like he was drunk.

Tae-hyuk smiled bitterly at the sight. The effect of the magic show was more amazing than he thought. Illegal Surgery was a skill that could be used to perform various surgical operations. He used it to do the impossible in reality and to make the other person think that he was in a dream.

Anesthesia was essential so that they didn't feel any pain. It was the drug that was found in the warden's safe. He had to appropriately blend it with the Illegal Surgery skill. He directly injected it into the nerves before waking up the sleeping Yakuza member.

‘Besides the anesthesia, isn't there a hypnotic effect?’

Tae-hyuk touched the remaining drug and sniffed it. There was a strangely sweet floral scent.



‘I think I’ve smelled this somewhere before... Ah, wasn’t this used in Choi Sung-yeol’s Death Circus?’

Scammer Choi Sung-yeol and Producer Kim Joon-young. The two criminals behind the Death Circus popped into Tae-hyuk’s head. Choi Sung-yeol used hallucinogens to attract customers to the multi-level scheme. The raw material was a real drug.

‘The prison is filled with ridiculous plots.’

Drugs were grown at the request of the Triads while members of Kuryu were secretly hiding here. The Blue Dragon Prison could be called the den of the mafia.

“I didn’t know anything and was just blinded by the gold...”

Tae-hyuk asked Nakada one last question.

“Then who is Mister Park? He doesn’t seem to be an executive of Kuryu.”

“Mister Park? I’m sorry but this is the first time I’ve heard that name.”

“Really? Then it isn’t the name of a henchman.”

“Well, this person...”

Nakada's eyes started to come alive as if the drug was wearing away. Tae-hyuk laughed and raised the cigarette that Yoo Cheol-ho smoked to Nakada's mouth.

“Now that's it. Have a good sleep.”

“.....”

Then he literally collapsed on the bed. After confirming that Nakada was asleep, Tae-hyuk quietly left the cell. When he woke up, he really would think that everything was a dream.

Anyway, he was able to get information about the Kuryu group. They said that they were going to leave here in the aftermath of the war. Most of the gold buried in Blue Dragon Prison were already in the hands of the Kuryu.

Only a few crumbs remained. These crumbs were revealed to the world in the process of construction. Tae-hyuk finally knew why the amount of gold found wasn't revealed to the world. It wasn't that big. In fact, the buried gold was being moved to another country.

As Nakada said that, there were still gold bullions without a master in this country.

Tae-hyuk smirked.

“One ball made it past the goalkeeper. I’m not the type to give up just because my opponents are strong.”

Thus, Tae-hyuk now considered the Kuryu group an enemy.

Then an amazing thing happened.

---

Tae-hyuk didn’t use any skills.

Despite that, a message appeared on the Demon Revealing Mirror. This had only happened once before. It was when he broke the plot of the Doll Play incident and destroyed the conspiracy related to the Triads. As a reward, he got a huge amount of points. He used it to become a Noble.

This meant...

Tae-hyuk gulped and read the message on the Demon Revealing Mirror.

[New mission: Find out about the Mafia Game.]

[The following rewards can be obtained by clearing the mission.]

-You will become a King.

“It sounds simple but... Anyway, it is one more reason to go against the mafia.”

The Triads committed a crime that was hard to tolerate. The Yakuza were deeply rooted in Korean society ever since the Japanese occupation. They were closely connected to the Red Mafia. In South Korea, the three criminal groups were fighting for power. And the ‘Mafia Game.’

“Hrmm. There is no real game...They might be symbolic words like Doll Play.”

He could become a King by achieving this mission. When he became a Noble, he was able to do things that were incomparable to when he was a Commoner.

But a King...

What could he do then? Tae-hyuk’s eyes shone in anticipation.

“Then first, I should speak with Choi Sung-yeol.”

He could only stay in Blue Dragon Prison for two more days. He had to get all the information he needed before then.

---

Habits didn't disappear easily.

Choi Sung-yeol smirked smugly.

“I have a small company and I need talented people like you. I have six months before I am released. I'll give you my phone number so once you go outside, contact me.”

“Hrmm. I can really make a lot of money?”

“It depends on you. But if you work hard, you can make a few thousand each time. Furthermore, it is a legitimate business...”

In Blue Dragon Prison, there were a huge number of criminals around. Choi Sung-yeol was trying to gather them for his business.

‘In fact, the whole thing is a scam.’

Tae-hyuk laughed because he knew what Choi Sung-yeol wanted to do. As the prisoner talking to Choi Sung-yeol left, Tae-hyuk naturally sat down.

“Hrmm? Kim Cheol-su? What are you doing?”

“A long story is annoying, so let's speak plainly. Don't you need a card shark?”

“...It seems like the rumor that I am collecting people has entered Kim Cheol-su’s ears. But I haven’t planned for a card shark.”

It meant that he already possessed enough.

“Really? I thought that superior card sharks were welcomed everywhere? I understand. I’ll see about going somewhere else.”

“Ah?! Wait a minute.”

Choi Sung-yeol’s expression changed. B grade card sharks could get a profit of millions of won. If an A grade card shark were to be mobilized, then tens of millions of won could be gained. And there were only 0.1% of card sharks who could gain hundreds of millions of won. They were called superior card sharks.

There were in such a minority that the number present in the country could be counted on one hand. Most of the card sharks in the Death Circus were B grade. Choi Sung-yeol knew that the card sharks such as Kim Shin-hyeong and Joo Sung-il were A grade. Yet someone who claimed to be superior grade card shark appeared in front of him.

Choi Sung-yeol said with a smile,

“If this is a lie then it won’t just be your fingers cut off. Well, I suppose I can’t do that in here.”

It was the most terrible thing for a card shark to fake their own rating. In other words, he needed to show off his skills.

“If you want to see, then I will show you. What game?”

“Let’s play simple poker. I will bring two people to play as well.”

“Yes.”

Under Choi Sung-yeol’s leadership, the poker game started in an instant.

“You are missing one person so I’ll join.”

“Go ahead.”

A deck of cards was placed in front of them by the human copier. All the people who remained in the dining room after dinner gathered in front of the gambling table. It was possible because there were few guards watching.

The four people playing each shuffled the cards so that there was no cheating. Then Choi Sung-yeol started distributing cards in front of everyone. One for himself, one for a pushover, and one for another pushover. Finally, one to the card shark. This was repeated five times before he was finally ready to draw five cards.

Now that their hands were completed, they could exchange as

many cards as they wanted.

Choi Sung-yeol kept his eyes wide open as he looked at Kim Cheol-su. Card sharks usually distributed the cards directly or shuffled at the end. However, Kim Cheol-su didn't do any of that.

“Are you just watching the first hand?”

He wouldn't know until the hands were revealed. Choi Sung-yeol had received a pair of Aces. It was almost the strongest hand in the first draw.

“I will only change one card.”

“I will change everything.”

“I will change three cards.”

The pushovers also changed their cards. The uncertainty of the cards being changed was the exciting thing about the five card draw.

“I will leave it as it is.”

“Hoh. It seems like you were quite lucky.”

“Really?”



Choi Sung-yeol gazed at the supposedly supreme card shark with narrowed eyes. He hadn't been able to do any tricks so far. But what was this confidence?

Thus, the full-fledged betting began. The pushovers both forfeited with one pair and two pairs. In the end, the game became a 1:1 match between Choi Sung-yeol and Tae-hyuk.

“Isn't it boring if we just play for fun?”

“Yes. What about a pack of cigarettes?”

“Yes.”

Choi Sung-yeol completed a full house of Queens. It was quite hard to get in a five card draw. With two bets, the pot increased to a pack of cigarettes.

“Show your cards. I have a Queens full house.”

“Hrmm. It was good that you exchanged your cards. But I'm sorry, the cigarettes are mine.”

Tae-hyuk slowly revealed his cards.

There was a 10, a Jack, a Queen, a King, and an Ace. They were all spades.

“Royal straight flush?!”

It was the strongest hand with a probability of  $1/649,740$ . The fact that he hadn't changed any cards meant that it was already completed when he received the cards.

Choi Sung-yeol's hands trembled. How was this possible?

“The cigarettes are appreciated. But you kept betting. Then let's continue for another pack.”

“.....!”

The strongest hand wasn't completed due to chance. The card shark's confidence might be due to a trick. It was hard to believe what he saw in front of his eyes. When the hell did he do the trick?

“T-This time I will shuffle alone.”

“Of course.”

The second game started. This time, Tae-hyuk didn't even check his cards.

“No change is necessary. I will leave it as it is.”

“U-Understood.”

Choi Sung-yeol forfeited with a pair of 9s and the two pushovers also forfeited. Tae-hyuk won the round without needing to show his hand.

“I don’t need to show it, but this is a test of my gambling skills. Let’s open it because I am curious.”

“Ah...yes.”

Choi Sung-yeol carefully revealed Tae-hyuk’s cards.

“O-Oh my god...

It was another royal straight flush.

“I hope this is enough to believe that I am a superior card shark.

“O-Of course. But how on earth...?”

“I’m sorry but it is a trade secret.”

Choi Sung-yeol sighed with a red face. It was hard to believe even after seeing it with his own eyes. This was a superior card shark that was within the top 0.1%.

“Huu... At any rate, it is a great technique.”

He couldn't figure out what trick the opponent used, no matter how he squeezed his head. Choi Sung-yeol looked at the card shark with respect in his eyes.

“Yes. I just need some work. If you are already full then it can't be helped.”

“Ah, no. A person like you is always welcome. However, if you are that good then...”

Working with Choi Sung-yeol wouldn't be able to get him hundreds of millions of won.

Tae-hyuk quietly reached out his hand. Then Choi Sung-yeol approached and politely bowed.

“I heard rumors that you use a type of drug. It is hard to find in South Korea. If you give me that, I'll show off my skills. How about it?”

“Ah...”

Choi Sung-yeol nodded with an expression of understanding. Then he spoke in a small voice,

“Of course. I knew a very good route to get that drug. I will

introduce you to them if you want.”

Tae-hyuk laughed.

He had caught the fish.

# Chapter 120 – Prelude To The Mafia Game

## #3

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Choi Sung-yeol's attitude changed and he started treating Tae-hyuk like a VIP.

It was because the technique Tae-hyuk previously showed was akin to a god's ability. Someone with those skills would be treated like a king everywhere he went. It was like Liu Bei holding onto Zhuge Liang's talent. Such a great person suggested to work together first.

Choi Sung-yeol started releasing information as if to show his greatness. Tae-hyuk clicked his tongue as he listened.

'He is a scammer, so he is both lying and exaggerating some things.'

However, Tae-hyuk didn't express his thoughts and acted moderately. Then some useful information popped out from Choi Sung-yeol's mouth.

'Once he becomes excited, he tends to talk more.'

"Meeting a great person like you is enough to feel like it was worth entering Blue Dragon. It is a pity that we will be split apart tomorrow."

He spoke like he was a businessman on a business trip, instead of a criminal stuck in prison.

“Then where are you going?”

The dissolution of Blue Dragon was decided and the inmates would be scattered all over the country. Most of them would go to Red Pheonix, Black Tortoise, and White Tiger.

Tae-hyuk replied with a smile,

“Are you going to White Tiger? Unfortunately, I am going somewhere else.”

Choi Sung-yeol dropped his head in an exaggerated gesture.

“Kuheok. It is really too bad. Still, it is destiny that we met. I hope we have a good relationship in the future.”

“I hope so as well.”

“Please contact me as soon as you settle. I will send you the goods that you want.”

“Huhu... I will be expecting it.”

Choi Sung-yeol was grinning since he thought he brought a

superior card shark to his side. However, he had provided free access to information that was difficult to obtain. He would make easy deals if he knew what the other person wanted. In particular, it was difficult to hide his desire to become stronger in a place like this. Tae-hyuk had memories of many criminals in Blue Dragon so he fully understood it.

‘After all, it is the Yakuza behind Choi Sung-yeol.’

The Yakuza dominated Japanese politics and economics in the darkness. But they even had their hands in South Korea.

‘Choi Sung-yeol and Kim Joon-young’s power alone couldn’t organize something like the Death Circus.’

Dozens of executives from many large corporations had become involved. No matter how large a multi-level company was, it would be difficult to establish connections with large corporations. Thus, he had felt uneasy when dealing with the Death Circus.

Afterwards, he found out that the Yakuza was behind Choi Sung-yeol.

‘It seems like the Yakuza had entered more deeply than I thought.’

Tae-hyuk recalled when he shattered Doll Play a few months ago. He had fought against the Chinese Triads. In the near future, the mafias of China, Russia, and Japan would wage war in South



Korea. He had thought that it was due to the massive profits that the Triad received in South Korea.

‘...I thought the mafia war wouldn’t happen because I destroyed one of the Triads’ major businesses, but I think I took them a bit too lightly.’

The condition for becoming a King was to win the Mafia Game.

A mafia war and mafia game. Maybe they were the same thing?

Tae-hyuk’s head was complicated. He knew the future, but not everything. In order to complete the puzzle, he had to find the missing pieces.

“I’m sorry for disturbing your thoughts.”

“It is nothing. Then I will contact you after moving.”

“Please do so.”

Tae-hyuk nodded lightly and rose from his seat. There was still work to do before leaving Blue Dragon Prison.

---

Kwang!

The door to the investigation headquarters opened and a man in a trench coat entered.

“Sunbae! I heard that Park Sung-yul decided to confess!”

Kang-suk looked up from where he was writing a report and said,

“It finished well. He called me.”

Phantom’s work had revealed the identity of the victims killed by Park Sung-yul. It was a tremendous achievement. Currently, detectives and support from Busan were bustling around the investigation headquarters.

He didn’t know what magic Phantom used, but Park Sung-yul confessed to all the murders.

“Hu... I ran like the wind as soon as I heard the news. I never thought that he would confess.”

Joo Hyun-ho was a huge fan of Detective Columbo. He resembled Columbo from his style of dressing to his investigation style. Therefore, he didn’t like the situation where he had to use an information source. He preferred to solve the mystery using his own head.

Yet not only didn’t he find any clues, he didn’t solve the case at all. Was there something happening? What forced the confession from Park Sung-yul’s mouth? He wouldn’t have confessed, even if

Columbo popped out from the TV.

Kang-suk laughed as he saw Hyun-ho's face.

“I heard that one of the victims had a executive of a gang as a family member.”

“W-What?”

“That person was also confined in the same prison.”

“It is like two enemies bumping into each other on a bridge. By the way, the executive of the violent organization... Was he someone recently caught?”

“Yes. A member of Gallery called Brown Bear. Do you understand?”

Hyun-ho muttered with wide eyes,

“He is a tremendous person! How many coincidences are there? This sounds like a prank from the God of Fate...”

“I don't know about the God of Fate but I'm sure the God of Crime has something to do with it. It is that person's work.”

“But Park Sung-yul, he is still alive. I thought he would

immediately murder the killer of his family member.”

Kang-suk printed the report and replied,

“Even though he is alive, it feels like death. Park Sung-yul never imagined that the person he killed was related to someone so big. If they are living in the same prison, it won’t be weird to eventually find his body.”

“In the end, he confessed so that he could live.”

“Yes. He would confess everything he did as long as he is sent to a prison without Brown Bear.”

Hyun-ho’s always smiling face distorted.

“He really is a rat bastard. So what does Sunbae think?”

Kang-suk rubbed at his tired eyes.

“First of all, he has decided to confess. Then the trials for the other murders he committed will begin. After that, the sentence he receives will likely be 100 times his current one and he will be sent back to prison.”

“A prison without Brown Bear.”

“Well, I did promise to do that. By the way, why am I the director of the investigation headquarters?”

Kang-suk looked at the reports stacked like a mountain in front of him and the documents that needed to be processed. The investigation was over, but it seemed like he would have to work overtime for a week to handle all of this.

“Well, there are so many reports that maybe you might mistakenly misplace one or two?”

Kang-suk laughed at Hyun-ho’s words.

“Well. Maybe that will happen.”

And Hyun-ho decided to buy energy drinks at the convenience store for the tired director.

---

Tae-hyuk looked at the face of the man sitting in front of him, He wore thick glasses and gave off a gentle expression. Who would imagine that the identity of this person was the ‘Bomber?’

The mafia was on a completely different scale from the criminals Tae-hyuk dealt with so far. Even if he had the crime skills, confronting them with the power of just one individual was limited. Therefore, Tae-hyuk needed the abilities of the ‘Bomber.’

For that to happen, Kim Taesung needed to escape from prison.

“This seems interesting.”

Kim Taesung said with a smile,

“It seems so.”

“I will go with Yoo Cheol-ho to Red Pheonix. Furthermore, you said that we will be in the same room?”

Kim Taesung sipped his coffee and nodded,

“It might be easier than you think to break out.”

“What do you mean?”

“Oh, I’m talking to myself.”

Yoo Cheol-ho completely lost his desire for a prison break a few days ago. However, his eyes became alive again once he heard he was going to Red Phoenix. It seemed like he knew a method of escaping. Obviously, he would start formulating a plan to escape once settled in his cell at Red Phoenix. Tae-hyuk would use that to break out the Bomber.

‘Then I will leave the tunnel to the mole.’

Kim Taesung smiled and said,

“However, it appears as if Shin Chang-ho’s revenge is successful.”

“I thought that you didn’t listen to rumors.”

“I can hear a lot of things if I just sit and drink tea.”

“Don’t worry, I will ensure that you get your revenge as promised.”

“Yes. I look forward to it.”

Tae-hyuk decided what to tell the Bomber.

Then he came to the conclusion. He hid the fact that he was the Phantom. Instead, he would let Kim Taesung know who the enemy was.

“I’m sorry but I have to leave before you.’

“Is that so?”

“And I will fight against the Yakuza in South Korea.”

Surprise appeared in Kim Taesung's eyes.

“The mafia people from Japan?”

“Yes. It is also relevant to you. The Yakuza is the one behind the Taesung Group.”

The face of Taesung Chemical's chairman, Song Won-jin appeared in his head. He was the one who watched the show created by Kim Joon-young in a lion mask.

“...Kim Cheol-su. How do you know all of this?”

“Don't think too hard. It is just a coincidence that I need to get rid of the ones you want revenge on. Isn't that good enough?”

“...Indeed. I understand.”

Kim Taesung nodded with an expression like he realized something. Tae-hyuk pulled out a photo and handed it to Kim Taesung. Kim Taesung, his wife and his daughter were smiling brightly at the camera.

“T-This...”

“I brought it back from your home. You don't need to worry, since I didn't touch anything else.”



Kim Taesung looked at the photo with shaking eyes. The image stamped there was a trace of the past that couldn't be realized in reality anymore.

“Don't you look happy in this picture? Don't forget that the people who took them all away from you are still alive.”

“.....”

Tae-hyuk saw that Kim Taesung's were now burning with hatred and anger.

Yes, explode. That was his role.

Tae-hyuk quietly rose from his seat and muttered.

“Everything I need to do here is over.”

The moment that Phantom left Blue Dragon Prison, he would show himself to the world.

This was the prelude to the Mafia Game.

# Chapter 121 – Divergent #1

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“It has been one month. You made sure to keep the promise.”

Tae-hyuk looked at Kang-suk as they rode the boat leaving Blue Dragon Prison. He seemed deep in thought and showed no reaction to Tae-hyuk's words. The reply came from a man in a trench coat.

“Phantom? No, should I call you Kim Cheol-su? The promise compensation will be guaranteed.”

“Hrmm. I hope something like last time isn't planned.”

The expression and tone of words was so creepy that Joo Hyun-ho couldn't help gulping. That face was a fake that was created. Was it like the special makeup used to shoot movies? He would know clearly if he touched it, but unfortunately he didn't have that courage.

Hyun-ho smiled and said,

“It's not like you will be caught if that happens again.”

Tae-hyuk gave a meaningful smile instead of answering. Then Hyun-ho felt regret. He was a specialist in terms of identifying the criminal's feelings and analyzing them. He didn't show it, but he was very proud of that fact.

But Kim Cheol-su... No, he couldn't tell anything about Phantom despite questioning him. However, this wasn't enough to make Hyun-ho give up. Phantom, whom he wanted to meet so much, was within a touching distance. He needed to at least find out what midnight snack Phantom liked to eat.

“By the way, do you know Shin Chang-ho?”

“The name is famous, so I've heard it a few times. But is the commissioner healthy these days?”

“He has a pollen allergy so it is a little tough... Hup.”

Hyun-ho realized that he made a mistake while talking about the police commissioner's recent problem. Conversely, he was the one being interrogated. This was a rudimentary mistake that showed the other person wasn't a beginner. Hyun-ho's eyes trembled.

As Hyun-ho panicked, Tae-hyuk gazed at the screen of the Demon Revealing Mirror floating in the air.

‘Isn't this a completely fraudulent skill?’

He rolled his eyes and gazed at the Demon Revealing Mirror again. There was a detailed description of the abilities and current psychological state of Joo Hyun-ho.

[No... It seems like the commissioner's secret mission is a bust...]

This was the ability of the [Hawk Eyes] attribute. Tae-hyuk took advantage of it so that Hyun-ho would make mistakes that he wouldn't normally make. It hadn't been possible to use it until now because he needed 10 affinity points to acquire.

However, he gained those missing points with the end of the prison war. He guessed it was because he saved Park Sung-yul, who Shin Chang-ho was supposed to kill.

‘But when I think about it, two points were added.’

He only got eight points for dealing with the Triads killer. Then he got two points for saving Park Sung-yul's life. He thought that he got affinity points by saving the lives of people who were destined to die.

‘But the first one is too low, while the second incident gave too many points.’

Did Big Brother only kill eight more people in the future? It didn't make sense. There was still some uncertainty regarding the affinity points that strengthened crime skills.

‘Anyway, the characteristics of ‘Hawk Eyes’... This is the full jackpot!’

If he activated it, he could grasp the state of the opponent, almost like mind-reading. In the eyes of Hyun-ho, who didn't know about

the crime skills, Phantom literally seemed like a monster.

Cho Kang-suk, who was quietly sitting beside Hyun-ho, opened his mouth.

“At any rate, I was able to finish the Park Sung-yul case due to Kim Cheol-su. Thank you very much.”

It was true that they solved the crime with the help of a criminal. Even though he solved a tough case, Cho Kang-suk didn't seem pleased.

“There is no need for thanks. I am getting paid for this after all.”

“If it wasn't for your help, it wouldn't have been so easy to find the identity of the victims.”

The image of the landlord after they found her daughter popped up in Kang-suk's head. Now Park Sung-yul would pay for his sins. All of it was due to Phantom's help.

As Kang-suk made a subtle facial expression, Joo Hyun-ho suddenly interrupted.

“By the way, the investigation headquarters is having a get together next week. Kim Cheol-su, why don't you come? You were also crucial in solving this case. Furthermore, it will be very entertaining if you join...”

Kang-suk applied a headlock to the smiling Hyun-ho. It was a bit much to recommend Phantom attend a party with cops who were trying to catch him.

“Hrmm. A dinner party. Not bad.”

“Do you see? Phantom thinks it is a good idea.”

“Unfortunately, it will become a crime if I attend, so I have to politely refuse.”

“O-Of course... Keok! S-Sunbae! I really will die!”

“Haha! Cheol-su. Forget about this idiot’s words.”

Unfortunately, Kang-suk and Hyun-ho didn’t correctly interpret Phantom’s words.

Phantom literally meant those words, since it was illegal for a minor to attend a drinking party.

---

Time passed by like the wind, and it had already been a week since Tae-hyuk returned from Blue Dragon Prison. He lied that he was studying abroad for one month, so there were no problems at all.

Forgery meant that he could come up with the necessary documents. He wondered about what had happened while he was away, since he gave some instructions to Kang Han-seong. They did better than he thought.

Even though Tae-hyuk had the crime skills, he was only one person. He could cover that disadvantage with them and the Bomber to some extent.

‘I’ll have to use it often in the future. Are these clothes enough?’

Tae-hyuk smiled at his appearance in the mirror. He had returned to his original appearance after looking like Kim Cheol-su for one month. However, the outfit he was wearing was slightly different. He was wearing a dark blue suit instead of his normal skinny jeans and leather jacket. Every year in spring, the three siblings would participate in a family event, and he was currently dressed up for it.

“Tae-hyuk! Are you ready?”

Ha-ran’s voice was heard outside his door. Tae-hyuk flicked back his long bangs and exited.

Ha-ran and Tae-min, who were ready to attend the event, were waiting at the front door. Tae-min pouted and said,

“What man takes longer to get ready than a woman? Detective

Cho Kang-suk is waiting.”

Tae-hyuk laughed at his brother’s reaction, whom he hadn’t seen in a long time. It was the feeling that Tae-hyuk had returned to where he should be.

“I have to say thank you to Kang-suk for driving us.”

“Hah! Ah right, did you remember to bring the barley tea for Detective-nim?”

“Ah! I nearly forgot! It is in the fridge. Can you take it out for me?”

When he saw Ha-ran and Tae-min treating Kang-suk like family, Tae-hyuk realized that many things had changed in the past month. Tae-hyuk grabbed the bag on the floor and walked outside.

Cho Kang-suk was sitting in the driver’s seat of a shining new car. The black sunglasses and white gloves made him look like a chauffeur.

“Eh? Kang-suk hyung. When did you get a car?”

“Just recently. It is because I was sleeping at the office every day after missing the last train. I weighed the pros and cons and bought it.”



“Aye, isn’t it for a different reason?”

“Really!”

Tae-hyuk didn’t ask anymore questions, although it seemed like Kang-suk bought it to go on dates with Ha-ran. Tae-hyuk put his bag in the trunk and sat in the back seat. Ha-ran carefully climbed into the front passenger seat.

“Kang-suk, thank you for doing this favor today.”

Tae-min instantly started to question Kang-suk.

“Detective-nim! You solved another case? It appeared on the news. You look very good on screen!”

Kang-suk laughed and started the car.

“Haha. Then don’t forget your seat belts. We are departing.”

Kang-suk drove the car in the warm sunshine.

---

After an hour, the party was able to arrive at their destination. Once they left the city and arrived at a wooded place, the air was completely different.

Ha-ran spoke cautiously from her seat next to Kang-suk.

“You have been very busy for a while... Thank you for taking us on such a long drive during your break.”

Kang-suk smiled gently and replied,

“It is nothing. I wanted to come with you.”

Tae-hyuk took his bag from the trunk and headed for the familiar place that he visited every year. It was a city run tomb where the ashes of the dead were kept.

Tae-hyuk headed to the place where his parents’ remains were. It wasn’t difficult to find the familiar names. It was a good location, not too high or too low.

[Seo Dae-han, Nam Ji-soo’s Tomb]

Tae-hyuk pulled out a framed picture and placed it in front of the urns. The two people had been returning from the same workplace when they got into an accident. He remembered Ha-ran’s face when his parents were first brought here.

–You will be together for the rest of eternity... After you die, stay on the royal floor.

Tears had flowed from Ha-ran's eyes as she said this.

Tae-hyuk muttered quietly,

“Don't worry. I will protect Noona and Tae-min no matter what. And...”

“Eh? I've already finished the preparations.”

“Sorry Tae-hyuk! Noona will do the rest!”

The rest of the group that arrived late started bustling around. They spread a mat on the floor and placed the prepared food on it.

Every year, on this day. It was the day to visit their deceased parents. The family gathered together and had a good time sharing stories.

“Kang-suk. Please try some fruit.”

“Ah, I'm sorry. I need to do something first. I will eat the fruit later.”

“Huh?”

Kang-suk, who had been watching the family talking, got up

from his seat. His black suit and sunglasses gave him a daunting appearance. However, he had a look of determination. Kang-suk stopped in front of the urns and slowly opened his mouth.

“Mother-nim, Father-nim. Nice to meet you. I am Cho Kang-suk and I work as a detective at Gangdong Police Station. Although I don’t have anything else, I am confident that I can support Seo Ha-ran.”

Ha-ran’s face turned red as she watched from the side.

“Omo, Kang-suk is really...”

Kang-suk slowly bowed to Seo Ha-ran’s parents. Then he declared with all his will.

“I will surely make Seo Ha-ran happy. Father-nim, Mother-nim. Please give me your daughter!”

“.....”

“D-Detective-nim?!”

“Whoa!”

The family showed various reactions to Kang-suk’s words. Kang-suk slowly got up and pulled out something from his pocket.

“I’m sorry Ha-ran. This should be done in a place with a little more atmosphere. Nevertheless, I wanted to greet Ha-ran’s parents.”

Kang-suk gazed at Ha-ran with passionate eyes. Then he kneeled in front of Ha-ran and asked, There was a ring box on his palm.

“I felt something the moment that I met you. Will you please marry me?”

Ha-ran stood without saying anything while Tae-hyuk interrupted the two.

“Wait a minute, Kang-suk hyung. You shouldn’t do this yet. I wish you would have consulted me on such an important matter. How can you even propose this way? You should at least rent a five star lounge and do a romantic event... Ah! I don’t know! Noona! Erase this day from your head. You will meet again next week. In the meantime, I will surely educate...”

Ha-ran, who was standing quietly for a while, suddenly threw herself into Kang-suk’s arms.

“Yes! I will!”

In Tae-hyuk’s mind, he had the perfect proposal planned for Cho Kang-suk and Seo Ha-ran, yet Kang-suk had destroyed it all at once.

“Ugh... If you accept... The precious proposal... My plan... Ah, ahhhhh!”

Tae-hyuk literally fell to the ground and moaned.

Kang-suk placed the ring on Ha-ran’s left ring finger. Thus, the two people promised to marry.

Kang-suk laughed excitedly and said,

“Now, everybody must be hungry. Let’s go eat meat! How about beef? Meat!”

Tae-hyuk rose from his seat with a sigh. The situation was good for both parties so there was nothing he could do.

Then Tae-hyuk realized that his plan was a success. With this, Kang-suk was now part of the family of three. Unlike the previous life filled with despair, he had changed their fates perfectly. As Tae-hyuk’s chest warmed, the Demon Revealing Mirror screen appeared in front of him.

[4 affinity points have been acquired.]

[You can use the affinity points to enhance crime skills or activate hidden attributes.]

‘What? Affinity points?’

He had gained unexpected points from Kang-suk proposing to Ha-ran. Tae-hyuk gulped and started thinking about the affinity points.

‘It don’t get it simply if I saved someone who was destined to die. That explanation doesn’t work with the four points I got now. This means...’

In the end, he finally saw what the true condition was for acquiring affinity points.

‘...By changing fate, the crime skills become stronger.’

The power to change fate. This was the hidden identity of the affinity points.

## Chapter 122 – Divergent #2

---

Kataros, who was sitting in his office at the castle, felt cold and rose from his seat. On top of that, his shoulders were covered with white snow.

“Jeez, the windows are open.”

Snow and icy winds had entered through a small gap in the window. The candle on the table shook and was instantly extinguished. It felt like he was looking at himself as a bitter smile appeared on Kataros’ face.

He was the godfather of the Red Mafia Ivankov family. However, several failures meant that the eyes of the other bosses were on him. Right now, Kataros only remained as a boss due to the support of his right arm, Semon. He needed to find something that would allow him to come back from behind.

At that time, there was a knock on the door.

“Boss. It is Semon. I brought what we spoke about.”

“Hrmm.”

Semon walked into the office and spoke like a butler.

“The weather is quite cold. If you keep the windows open like



this then you will catch a cold.”

Kataros had long silver hair that completely covered his shoulders. Then he felt a cold touch at his fingertips.

“It seems to me like the wind is coming from South Korea. I want to see what it feels like.”

Semon answered with a big sigh,

“Open your eyes. Stay still for a moment.”

“It seems like I am still a young child in your eyes.”

“Is that right?”

But Kataros closed his eyes and let Semon work. Semon brushed at Kataros’ shoulders with careful gestures, like he was handling a delicate piece of glass. Then he placed the materials he was holding on Kataros’ table.

“Hum hum. By the way, it seems like Boss really likes Phantom.”

“Being Arsene Lupin was the dream of any child who watched him.”

“Huh? Did I hear that correctly?”

“It’s a joke. I just feel like I need this person’s abilities in order to survive.”

Semon looked at his boss with a strangely grim expression. In his eyes, the boss’s dazzling silver hair shone.

Kataros started to read the neatly arranged data about Phantom.

“Mister did a better job than I thought.”

Semon nodded as he heard the name of the spy he planted.

“I wasn’t expecting Mister to become so close to Phantom. It seems to truly be god’s work.”

“Phantom. The more I see, the more I like. He really has unpredictable abilities. He managed to defeat the fully armed Big Brother. He even used the press and government freely. In addition, he has a strange magic that can change his voice and face. It is like he is the second coming of Lupin.”

Semon smiled and remained silent.

“Hrmm. By the way, look at this. Phantom was also involved in the collapse of Blue Dragon Prison?”

It was a well-known place for Kataros. It was one of the four

prisons modelled after Alcatraz. Inside the Blue Dragon Prison, the Japanese Yakuza and Chinese Triads were each working in their own interests.

Kataros looked at Semon. Semon was looking back like a parent gazing at their child.

“How much information does Mister have?”

“He is watching out for the mafia in South Korea. It will be easy for him to act as a spy.”

“Hrmm.”

“What would you like to do? Should I instruct him to move more aggressively?”

“No, just watch him for now. There is a possibility that Phantom will confront the Triads and the Yakuza.”

“I think I know what Boss wants.”

“Yes. It means we might be able to cooperate to face the same enemy. Tell Mister to keep an eye on Phantom. If Phantom is the enemy of the Yakuza and Triads...”

Kataros looked down at the photograph of Phantom with grey eyes.

“...I will go and meet him directly.”

---

He had been thinking about the proposal since the Christmas he spent with her. Kang-suk went on a date and then suddenly volunteered at the orphanage. Even the good girls in dramas would frown at that.

However, Ha-ran smiled brightly and thanked him for introducing her to the cute children. At that moment, Cho Kang-suk once again set his heart on Seo Ha-ran. However, the direct decision was made after the Park Sung-yul case.

“Ah Hyung! It isn’t ready yet.”

“Heh. Originally beef should be cooked like the meat is alive.”

“Don’t just eat meat, have vegetables as well. Oh, Kang-suk shouldn’t just watch. I’ll make a wrap for you.”

Ha-ran started putting all sorts of delicious things into a lettuce wrap. The finished product was larger than expected. It was the size of Kang-suk’s fist, a size that was impossible to eat in one bite.

However, Kang-suk wasn’t the type of person to give up. After clearing his throat a few times, he opened his mouth widely and put the lettuce wrap in. He leisurely tasted it and said it was

delicious.

Tae-hyuk and Tae-min started clapping from where they were sitting on the sidelines.

“Wah. He ate it in one bite.”

“It is almost an art form.”

Then Ha-ran’s eyes widened and she said,

“Omo, I’m sorry. I made it too big.”

After that small incident, Tae-min started to grill the meat with tongs and scissors. A few pieces of meat were on top of the hotplate. They had already eaten meat, rice and cold noodles so their chopsticks were slowing down.

However, this wasn’t the end for Kang-suk. He spoke with a dignified tone, like a commanding officer speaking to soldiers who were about to go fight.

“We can’t eat this much at our age. This won’t work. Auntie! Add four more servings here please!

Both Tae-hyuk and Tae-min raised their thumbs. There was always more room in their stomachs for meat. The eyes of the warriors started to burn at the appearance of a new enemy.

“Ohh! Game two!”

“I loosened my belt.”

Kang-suk made a fist.

“Let’s eat until we die.”

“Ugh! Ugh! Ugh!”

In the end, the four people ate 12 servings of beef and literally collapsed to the ground. Even breathing was painful.

“Uh... I think I will die...”

“I don’t think I can eat anything for the next week...”

Ha-ran, the only one who seemed fine, held out a tray with a smile.

“Does anyone want to drink tea for dessert?”

Tae-hyuk and Tae-min, who were lying on the floor, lifted their trembling hands.

Kang-suk smiled happily at the sight. His job wasn't just catching criminals. For a while, he had forgotten the reason why he had become a police officer.

“...Ha-ran.”

“Huh?”

“I love you.”

Ha-ran's face turned bright red.

“O-Oh my... Kang-suk really... It is foul to say it in a place like this!”

“Haha.”

Yes. He had to protect that smile.

---

“Are they tired since it has been a long time? It will take some time to get home. They are already sleeping.”

Ha-ran and Tae-min were sleeping in the back seats. Tae-hyuk smiled from where he was sitting in the passenger seat.

“So where do you plan to do the ceremony? You know that you can’t do it by yourself like this time right? I’m looking forward to helping you organize the best wedding.”

“Hmm hmm. Was it better to make it a bit more romantic?”

“Wah. Did you only realize that now? Aigoo... I really want to ask you again to cancel it. Well, Noona didn’t dislike it so I will let it go.”

Kang-suk cried out.

“Don’t act like a mother-in-law!”

“Ah! Kang-suk hyung! Focus on driving! There might be an accident.”

“Don’t worry. I only just bought a car but I have driven many police cars.”

Tae-hyuk watched Kang-suk bang his chest with a confident expression. On the road, the only light source was from the car’s headlights.

Tae-hyuk looked out the windshield and thought. It hadn’t been revealed what fate had changed due to Kang-suk’s decision.

‘I need to find out why.’



In the future, he would need to gain a large amount of affinity points to fight the mafia. Therefore, he had to figure out the exact mechanism behind gaining them.

‘First of all, I should compare the blacklist members with different tendencies. Then should I catch another person to check their affinity points?’

Tae-hyuk had fought the killer Big Brother, sent by the Triads. He used Damage to Both Sides to destroy him. Then Tae-hyuk was able to gain eight affinity points. It meant that he could gain points by catching criminals that weren’t on the blacklist.

Apart from Big Brother, Tae-hyuk had dealt with a considerable number of criminals. However, not all cases gave him affinity points. He wondered what the difference was.

‘The most likely hypothesis is that I can acquire affinity points by changing the determined destiny.’

Tae-hyuk knew a criminal that he could use to confirm this.

‘Cho Min-hyuk!’

He was the leader of the pseudo-religion, Sun, and had thousands of followers. If he destroyed the religion then thousands of fates would surely change. But it wouldn’t be an easy fight. In the first place, the scale itself was different compared to what he had done

so far.

‘The leader committed all sorts of illegal acts but was never judged by the law.’

Nevertheless, Tae-hyuk had knowledge about Sun due to one of the top executives being imprisoned in Blue Dragon. He brainwashed his followers and tried to sell them abroad. He used an incense that made the people light-headed.

‘Perhaps...’

Tae-hyuk had encountered something similar. It was the hypnotic incense used by Choi Sung-yeol. Before leaving Blue Dragon Prison, Tae-hyuk had gained all sorts of information from Choi Sung-yeol.

The Yakuza were behind the Death Circus. Then there were those who would use the hypnotic incense beside Choi Sung-yeol.

‘...Maybe the Yakuza is behind Sun.’

The chance of that wasn’t zero.

Tae-hyuk smirked wickedly. Whether he liked it or not, he had to fight the mafia in order to win this game. If he could gain points from changing fate then he would gain an enormous number by smashing Sun.

Furthermore, the opponent was the criminal on the blacklist that was most likely to be associated with the mafia.

“Then I need to smash them even more.”

He wouldn't have been able to fight them right after obtaining the Demon Revealing Mirror. However, now he was a Noble with various crime skills and connections.

Sun, a religious cult with thousands of followers in South Korea. They were Tae-hyuk's next target.

# Chapter 123 – Swallow The Sun #1

---

Shatter the Sun Cult.

At first glance, it seemed simple to handle them using the Bomber or the Phantom's abilities. However, unlike all the previous cases, this wasn't a problem that would end so simply.

Would it end just by blowing up the base of the Sun Cult with a bomb? They would simply move elsewhere. He knew of the crimes committed by the leader, but plenty of people went to jail instead of him.

In the end, he couldn't use his previous methods to get rid of Sun.

"First, I should classify the chess pieces that are available right now."

He needed to use everything he had to fight the Sun Cult. If possible, he wanted to avoid working as Seo Tae-hyuk as much as possible, but there was a limit to Phantom's network.

Tae-hyuk opened a desk drawer and pulled out an old chessboard that he used to play with. After unfolding it, he placed the black king in the middle.

"This is me, Seo Tae-hyuk. My identity absolutely can't be revealed, so it is something to be unconditionally defended."

Next was the queen. It was the strongest piece that he could move freely.

“That is Phantom.”

The loss of the queen would play a huge part in the king’s resignation. Both ends of the chessboard were for the rooks.

“Then Big Mama and Moonlight Flower.”

They were chess pieces made before he started acting as Phantom. When he met them, he had to hide that he was associated with Phantom as much as possible.

Big Mama’s intelligence network. Moonlight Flower’s hacking and stealing skills were necessary to deal with the Sun Cult. Tae-hyuk held a bishop and muttered,

“I don’t like it but the bishops will be Shin Se-ho and the Bomber.”

They were difficult to use, but had the ability to reverse the situation. The pawns were the members of Nuclear Bomb that could be freely mobilized with money.

Finally, there were the knights. Tae-hyuk placed the knights on an empty space and said.

“This is Detective Cho Kang-suk and Investigator Joo Hyun-ho.”

They had the authority to investigate and arrest the enemy.

He had to meet the rooks and pawns as Seo Tae-hyuk. He would meet the knights and bishops as Phantom.

He imprinted this firmly in his mind and reached out towards the white king, who could be called the enemy.

“Now, let’s go slay the king.”

---

“You have been promoted. Why are you still eating noodles?”

Kang-suk heard a familiar voice as he was organizing the investigation headquarters. It was his junior, who was smirking while eating spoonfuls of butter.

“It is a busy day. Have you come to help me clean up?”

Joo Hyun-ho placed an ice coffee in front of Kang-suk and said,

“Oho, avoiding the answer means that something is going on. The suspect will answer the investigator.”

Kang-suk thought about what happened yesterday and cleared his throat a few times.

“Actually, I proposed to Seo Ha-ran.”

“Wah! You finally made a decision! Congratulations Sunbae! Aren’t you moving at the speed of light?”

“Here.”

“Wow! A ring that I never thought I would see on Sunbae’s finger! It is somewhat modest, but made of platinum, a symbol of unchanging love! Judge, this is definitely an engagement ring!”

Kang-suk couldn’t help laughing as Hyun-ho made a fuss.

Who would have ever thought that he was an investigator from Russia’s Federal Security Service? Of course, he had returned to Korea after half a year of working there, stating that it didn’t fit him.

However, he was considered one of the top three investigators in South Korea. Hyun-ho was delighted.

“So when is the wedding?”

“I think May would be perfect. I want to give Ha-ran the happiest

day.”

“Of course, the inspector will be glad...”

“The inspector?”

“When I saw him, Inspector-nim was worried about when Sunbae would finally get married, so I asked him what he would do if it happened. He said that he would bow deeply to the bride. I just want to see that.”

Kang-suk felt dizzy at the thought. Such a bet was going on without him realizing it? Then why? He didn’t hate it.

“Hrmm, so?”

“...I’ll sing the congratulatory song.”

“That’s okay, you can just emcee.”

As Kang-suk desperately waved his hands in rejection, Hyun-ho looked at Kang-sk with wide eyes.

“Kang-suk doesn’t want Phantom to emcee?”

“Why would he be interested in emceeing my wedding?”



“You are best friends.”

What? Who would want Phantom as the emcee of his wedding?

Kang-suk looked at Hyun-ho with a perplexed expression.

“I’m sorry, but I don’t want the special troops as guests for the wedding.

“Huhu. Won’t it be spectacular?”

Hyun-ho took off his trench coat and placed it on a coat hanger. Then he sat in his chair and started to whisk the whipped cream in his coffee with a strange face.

“Since then, have you been in contact with Phantom?”

“Well. No? He just took the money. He is strangely quiet.”

“Then, does Sunbae know a way to contact Phantom separately?”

“No. There is no way to contact him first. It’s a burner phone. The number is changed every time, and the one time I tracked the location, he appeared to be in Sichuan China.”

Despite the interest of the police commissioner, Phantom’s identity was still veiled.

“He is like 007. But if you have a chance to meet Phantom again, will you take me with you?”

Kang-suk narrowed his eyes at the other person.

Joo Hyun-ho had started to show a large interest in Phantom not long ago. It might not be for a big purpose. It seemed like he wanted to play a game against Phantom.

There was a strange feeling in his mind, but he couldn't say what it was. Kang-suk couldn't help laughing at the thought. Phantom was someone that even people from other sides of the earth were interested in. It was no wonder that Hyun-ho was interested in him.

“Do you want to embarrass yourself like last time you met Phantom?”

“Aish, surely not. At any rate, you said you recorded it the last time Phantom contacted you. Can you send it to me?”

“I already sent it to the main office. Can't you go and look directly?”

“I wanted to listen while writing a few reports. Well, it doesn't contain anything important. In addition, an investigator like me will be bombarded with things to do if I go to the main office.”

There was always a desire to ask his opinion on new cases. Furthermore, he wasn't in a position to refuse. Thus, the work would steadily accumulate.

Kang-suk looked at him with a sympathetic expression.

“You are also suffering a lot.”

In the end, that was the trouble with being too talented.

---

Not much had changed about Big Mama's pawn shop. Tae-hyuk deliberately built up trust by trading her forged artwork that was worth several million won at a time.

There were two types of criminals that stolen goods brokers dealt with: Those who were lucky enough to get lucky and sell many goods, and those who would bring in a small, but consistent profit. Of course, it was the latter that stolen goods brokers wanted to trade with for a long time.

“Omo, did Tae-hyuk come?”

Big Mama smiled as she checked the door and rose from her seat. There were no other customers inside the pawn shop.

When they first met, Tae-hyuk had felt a prickling on his skin. However, after some steady trading, her voice was soft, like they

were old partners.

“I’m sorry but I won’t be selling anything today.”

“Really?”

“Do you know the group ‘Sun’, active in Z City?”

“Um, that is an emerging religion.”

Big Mama narrowed her eyes and said some neutral words. She didn’t know what he had to do with that place, so she refrained from any negative vocabulary.

Tae-hyuk smiled and revealed his relationship with Sun in one word.

“Yes. That cult.”

“Hoh. You know. Do you need information about it?”

“The more information there is, the better. I also want to know some family members who have gone missing due to the cult.”

“This seems quite lucrative.”

“I heard that they have some of Gauguin’s oil paintings there.”

Big Mama's eyes changed.

Paul Gauguin was a French painter that was the representative of post-impressionism. He left numerous oil paintings behind that were traded at a price of over 100 million won.

“I didn't know that they had such a classy hobby.”

“Ah right. Once I get the goods, I will make a deal with Big Mama. Can't we profit from each other?”

Big Mama looked down slightly and laughed,

“Ohuhu... I welcome such a good deal. By the way, can you do it by yourself? If necessary, I can introduce other experts to you.”

“I'll ask you at a later time if I need it.”

Big mama wrote message on her tablet.

“Wait two days for the information. And the price will be this.”

She showed Tae-hyuk the number she had written on the tablet screen.

10 million won.

“In the past, it would be 20 million won. Is this a regulars discount?”

“Yes. I hope for your support in the future and will be giving you a special service. And even if you don’t have any work, you can always come by to play. I will make you delicious tea.”

“Cough... Maybe after this is over. Then this is a deposit.”

Tae-hyuk handed over a bundle of 50,000 won bills. Thus, the information deal with Big Mama ended without any problems. If he bargained a bit more, then he would’ve received free information on the condition that he turn over Paul Gauguin’s paintings.

However, this deal with Big Mama was just right, since he might get damaged if he went too far. He had to always keep an eye on the other person.

Tae-hyuk didn’t forget that fact.

---

Sun’s nest was on the outskirts of Z City in Gyeonggi Province. They purchased a ruined university and built their own kingdom on that vast site.

Tae-hyuk was sitting in a cafe and drinking coffee while reading

the information that Big Mama gave him. How much did he read?

He stood up and cried out,

“Oh, this is too much for half-price information!”

Indeed, there was no free discount in this world. The amount was only 1/3 of the other information he bought.

“This lady...”

In fact, he had expected it to some extent. Sun was a strictly closed off religious group. Finding out information about such a place would be difficult. The amount was small, but it was better than nothing.

Apart from the owner sitting at the counter and looking at a photo book, no other person could be seen. Tae-hyuk approached the cafe owner and asked slowly,

“I’m sorry, but can I ask for a refill?”

The cafe owner stood up with an embarrassed expression.

“Aigoo, that’s right. I was lost in thought for a moment. I will come straight away.”

“This cafe has a good atmosphere. But there doesn’t seem to be too many customers...”

“Haha... Is that so? In fact, when the store first opened, many people came from the nearby university. However, it eventually closed down and people left for the Seoul campus.”

“It must’ve been hard for Boss-nim.”

“Still, there are occasional customers from nearby factories. By the way, did you come here for a business trip?”

He had transformed into a white-collar worker with the crime skills. The misunderstanding was natural.

Tae-hyuk lied easily,

“Actually, my family member fell into some strange group. I came to meet someone from the Internet to come up with some countermeasures.”

“Ah, it is like that. Hu... There really are things like cults in this country...”

Tae-hyuk avoided the gaze of the cafe owner and confirmed the location of the hidden cameras installed in the shop.

‘I didn’t say anything and he is already talking about a cult. Isn’t



this too amateurish?’

It was true that he came here to meet someone. However, Tae-hyuk knew that this cafe was one of the traps created by Sun.

## Chapter 124 – Swallow The Sun #2

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Anybody that had their close family or a friend that fell into a cult would somehow try to rescue them. The Sun Cult had dedicated personnel to deal with such people.

This was a remote place far from the centre of the city. There was only a factory and some rice fields around. In addition, most of the stores that traded with university students had closed down. It was to the extent that there was just a lonely convenience store.

If there was an appointment to meet someone about the Sun Cult, they would inevitably meet at this cafe.

‘It is because there has to be a meeting before entering the base of the cult. This cafe is the best trap. However, doesn’t the status of the leader seem a bit low?’

It had been one year after gaining the crime skills. Did he feel like this because he had faced so many criminals in the meantime?

Tae-hyuk found 12 hidden cameras inside the cafe. There were also mini-microphones installed at the tables. Obviously, the bishops of the Sun Cult would be checking all of the guests that entered here. Using Tae-hyuk’s abilities, he could penetrate the building without anyone knowing.

But in order to shatter the Sun cult, he needed to use a frontal attack.

“Here is your coffee. By the way, I guess you have been waiting for someone. Have they arrived yet?”

Tae-hyuk looked at the door as he replied,

“He is a little late but I think he is coming now.”

There was a rattle as someone entered the cafe. Naturally, the gazes of the people inside the cafe would focus on him. He was a man in his 30s with shortly cropped hair. His physique showed that he exercised a significant amount.

The man looked around the cafe and confirmed that there were only two people. He turned to Tae-hyuk and bowed slightly,

“Are you Kim Cheol-su?”

“Ah, yes. Hello.”

“I am Lee Gun-woo. Pleased to meet you.”

He extended a small business card towards Tae-hyuk. The words ‘Republic of Korea’s Army’ in English and the title of ‘Captain’ were written. Lee Gun-woo received Tae-hyuk’s business card and muttered with a surprised face,

“...It is your real name. Ah. I’m sorry.”

“Haha, it is okay. Isn’t it a name you often see in textbooks?”

Anyone who saw the business card with ‘Kim Cheol-su, maths teacher’ would have the same reaction. The two people had only exchanged a few phone calls. It was the first time actually meeting today.

Lee Gun-woo ordered a glass of white mocha and sat at the table where Tae-hyuk was currently at. Then he carefully started his story.

Lee Gun-woo was a lieutenant who failed to get promoted and was preparing for discharge. He then found out that his sister had become involved in the ‘Sun’ cult. He was searching for a person to help him and met Tae-hyuk.

“In fact, I hadn’t thought about going there directly at first. She is an adult and I should leave her to her own work. However... I don’t think I can leave her in a cult.”

Tae-hyuk nodded with a heavy expression.

“Yes, I also want to regain the family that I lost to the Sun Cult.”

“That family is...”

“Ah, my little brother.”

“I see. At any rate, I want to find Min-young and bring her out.”

The two people exchanged information about the Sun Cult. And there were a few eyes watching them.

---

The base of the Sun Cult was only a minute’s drive from the cafe.

Lee Gun-woo started the car and said,

“I wanted to bring a handgun, like a pistol. However, I don’t have much time left until my discharge, and I don’t want to go to military prison, so I am just a soldier in spirit.”

“Haha. Then did you bring any weapons?”

“Ah, I brought a small rod, so I will be fine. Rather, you should be careful as a maths teacher.”

“No. A lot of students abandoned maths so I had to study other subjects.”

Lee Gun-woo continued to joke around as if to calm himself down. Then he suddenly stopped and raised his hand from the steering wheel. There wasn’t even time for a deep breath as they arrived at the base of the Sun Cult.

Tae-hyuk spoke like it was the first time he had visited this place.

“It isn’t as large as I thought.”

“It seems so. I thought that it would at least have an atmosphere similar to that of a military base or a prison, but the fence is low and people can freely enter and leave.”

Tae-hyuk knew the answer but he didn’t speak it aloud. He was just a high school teacher whose family member was taken away.

The reason for having no barriers or guards was simple: the Sun followers lived in groups of five. They were the shackles that restricted each other’s actions.

Lee Gun-woo took slow, deep breaths and said,

“Hu... Then as we already discussed, let’s break through the front.”

Even if it wasn’t wide, there were three 4-story buildings. No matter how they moved, it would take a while with just two of them.

“I see we have people who came to visit. Sun welcomes all visitors.”

As they drove through the gate, a few people in suits came out to greet them. The man standing in the front said with a smile,

“Hwanin said you would come and you really did. The two of you are welcome.” (Hwanin: [google link](#). I suggest you glance over this link because this myth will be mentioned several times)

Lee Gun-woo’s eyes widened at the unexpected hospitality.

“Kim Cheol-su and Lee Gun-woo, please follow me. Min-young is waiting for you.”

Lee Gun-woo groaned as the name of his sister emerged from the man’s mouth.

“H-How do you...”

“Hwanin knows everything. Then please come this way for a more detailed explanation.”

The guide was one of the bishops of the Sun Cult. They followed him and arrived at a big bathroom.

“Aren’t I going to see my younger sister? And how the hell did you know my name and my sister’s name? Perhaps...”

Lee Gun-woo was obviously agitated. He even came to this place without saying anything to his little sister. Then suddenly, he

recalled a rumor about Sun's leader.

He called himself the incarnation of Hwanin and had the ability to see the past, present, and future. Surely those abilities weren't real. Such thoughts disappeared from his head. He didn't believe in things like that in this world. There was obviously some crafty trick.

The bishop smiled at Gun-woo's look of suspicion and said,

"I'm sorry but there is an order in everything. First you have to clean your body and wipe away everything of this world. Then we will arrange some clothes for you."

Gun-woo didn't protest again and entered the bathroom. Tae-hyuk followed behind him with a puzzled expression. In fact, Tae-hyuk knew the trick used by the bishop.

'How did he do that? It was a cold reading based on the contents of the wiretap. What the hell, wasn't that a tactic used a few hundred years ago?'

It was a technique that utilized psychological tricks during a conversation to guess what the person was thinking.

'The information that they have isn't perfect yet, so they will use the time in the bathroom to supplement it.'

Tae-hyuk smiled. It was like watching a young child's cute tricks.



‘Well, if that is what you wish. I’ll give it to you.’

---

The smiling expression disappeared from the bishop’s face as the two men entered the bathroom.

“Huhu. The two of them don’t know that they are moths in a web. Hey, what are you doing? Go grab their ID cards and phones.”

“Yes, I understand!”

“Make sure to set up some massages. It should take at least one hour.”

During that time, all the preparations needed to be finished. The bishop made them take a bath under the pretense of being cleansed. It was a prelude to the scam that would now begin.

“It has been a while since people have fallen into the trap.”

The cafe and nearby rest areas were all operated by Sun. Those who visited there were under the watchful eye of Sun. If one of them tried to come here, then it would be like this event.

When bathing, everyone was forced to undress. Of course, they would leave their wallets and phones in the locker room.

The believers entered and came outside with something.

“We got everything!”

“Yes. Check if they have SNS and get as much personal information as you can. I’ll be unlocking the phones.”

“I understand.”

The bishop smiled as he received the phones from the believers. Smartphones made cold reading much easier. This little device contained everything about a person. Moreover, it was possible to release the fingerprint lock.

“If there are fingerprints, then we can collect a lot of it. After making the artificial fingerprint, I can see all the personal information. It is a really good world.”

Name, gender, age as well as the place of birth and what school they attended. The name and contact information of the people they knew. The most visited sites on the Internet. In addition, there was the ID card.

From there, it was simple to pass on the information and make the leader appear like the incarnation of Hwanin. The only thing left was how to produce a plausible stage.

“It is very simple. We have done this over 100 times.”

The bishop laughed and headed for his studio with the two phones.

An hour passed by.

After bathing, Tae-hyuk and Gun-woo opened the bathroom door and went outside. The waiting believer held out some clothes and a glass of milk.

“This is milk gained directly from the cows raised here. There are no external chemicals ,so you can drink with confidence.”

Gun-woo muttered as he took it,

“It really feels like everything about the world has been washed away.”

Then they heard the voice of the waiting bishop.

“It was cleansing. You have been purged through Hwanin’s power. Now you are ready to meet Hwanin.”

“Ah, then your name...”

“I am called Song Chi-hyun. The founder is waiting. Please follow

me.”

Tae-hyuk and Gun-woo walked down the long corridor as they followed Song Chi-hyun, a bishop of the Sun Cult.

## Chapter 125 – Swallow The Sun #3

---

“This atmosphere is...”

Lee Gun-woo looked around with an impressed expression. As they walked down the corridor, most of the building had modern architecture. However, once the door opened, an amazing scene greeted them. It was like a palace from the Joseon Dynasty.

There was an altar with a thin curtain covering it, while the followers were lined up on either side.

“Welcome.”

“I’ve been waiting for you.”

Two bishops, wearing the traditional clothing of officials, greeted them with benevolent expressions. Song Chi-hyun introduced them first.

“The two people before you are Pungbaek and Unsa.” (Two of Hwanin’s 3,000 followers. Pungbaek=earl of the wind. Unsa=master of the clouds)

Lee Gun-woo cried out at the familiar names,

“That means you...”

“Yes. I am Usa.” (Another follower. Master of the rain)

They were three people from the Dangun myth. (See the Hwanin link) They were natural titles based on the leader of the church being called Hwanin. At that moment, someone’s voice was heard from among the silent followers.

“O-Oppa?”

Lee Gun-woo stared at the other person. She was wearing court clothing, but he was sure that she was his sister.

“Hey, this brat! What are you doing here?! Do you know how worried I have been?”

“What...? I have become one of the seven fairies who serve Hwanin. More than that, Oppa. Listen. Hwanin is really great...”

As the brother and sister reunited, Tae-hyuk looked at the shadow beyond the curtain. It was Cho Min-hyuk, the leader of ‘Sun.’

‘No, isn’t he called Hwanin here? However, this scent is clearly...’

There were a few incense burners placed around the room. A slightly sweet aroma was coming from them. It was the incense that Choi Sung-yeol used to blur the mind.

‘It is diluted since my stats aren’t falling as drastically as the last time it happened. However, it certainly looks like his judgment is declining.’

Lee Gun-woo’s eyes were drooping and the mental strength of a soldier couldn’t be seen.

‘The Yakuza made this? It has a crazy effect...’

It was the cause of the blind devotion among the followers. The interior decorations and gorgeous garments that seemed to come from a historical drama set were meant to hide it.

Lee Gun-woo was perfectly drunk on the scent.

Even so, he never forgot his purpose for coming here.

“C-Cough! Anyway, I will be taking my sister.”

“I mean, I’m not going! I will continue staying here!”

Min-young’s voice was small compared to her brother, who seemed like he would burst on fire at any moment. He grabbed her hand to drag her out. However, the watching bishops didn’t say anything. It seemed like they had expected this and were waiting for something.

Tae-hyuk realized that the shadow behind the curtain had started swaying.

‘It is starting.’

As if it was waiting, a strange voice flowed from behind the curtain.

“Lee Gun-woo. Your sister is tied up by karma. If you bring her out of here, then she will lose her life.”

Fury filled Lee Gun-woo’s eyes at the words. No matter how he scolded her, she was still his sister. He wouldn’t allow any threats to her life.

“Haha. You’ve finally exposed your true colours! I think I know how you scammed Min-young. Min-young. Ignore his words.”

Lee Gun-woo pulled his sister’s hand and tried to leave the room. He thought that his little sister probably told them his personal information. However, Lee Min-young’s condition was strange. She desperately tried to persuade Lee Gun-woo.

“...Oppa, you are misunderstanding. Hwanin’s words are all true.”

“What? What is it?”



The leader whispered in a low voice towards the confused Lee Gun-woo.

“Lee Gun-woo. The same applies to you. You are also tied up by karma.”

Lee Gun-woo started shouting,

“It is like I told my sister! Who would fall for such tricks?!”

At that moment, the leader spoke like he was giving a prophecy.

“Aren’t you struggling because of the distorted future?”

“Anyone can say that.”

“I think it would be nice to speak a little more clearly. Captain Lee Gun-woo and Private Park Woo-hyuk.”

“.....!”

Lee Gun-woo stopped moving with a shocked expression. He seemed like a stone.

Then the surprised Lee Min-young asked,

“O-Oppa? What is it? What does Hwanin mean?”

“.....”

It didn't make sense.

How did that person...?

The accident that occurred six months ago appeared in Lee Gun-woo's head. It was treated as confidential, and his name didn't even appear in the newspapers. Naturally, he didn't even inform his family. But that name emerged from that person's mouth.

“Tsk tsk. Have you realized your ignorance? But don't worry. The sins committed are also part of the cleansing. It is my role to remedy that.”

“.....”

Lee Gun-woo bit his lip.

He was originally scheduled to be promoted to major. He felt he was doing well and couldn't be touched as he lived at headquarters. However, there was a huge mistake. Lee Gun-woo ignored the harsh abuse that was happening. The victim, Park Woo-hyuk, couldn't endure it anymore and committed suicide through a grenade in his barrack. At the time, there were four other soldiers present and they also lost their lives.

It was a big enough event for the unit itself to be dismantled. Lee Gun-woo could've stopped it if he paid more attention to the team. Of course, his promotion disappeared. He was barely able to avoid a dishonourable discharge due to his history.

“Your karma is the soldiers who died unjustly. An offering is necessary to purify it.”

“Offering? Money?”

The answer came from a different place.

“Oppa, Hwanin isn't interested in such things. He isn't a shaman who tricks people for money.”

“Then what is the offering?”

The leader stopped for a moment and beckoned. The believers moved and lit a few more incense burners. The scent became more widespread in the room.

“The proof that you are still alive is enough. The clothes you wore, the bedding you sleep in, the shoes you wear. Offer them up in the cleansing ritual.”

The words were convincing. If the leader had asked for money, he wouldn't have believed it so easily. But the offerings were just keepsakes. Wouldn't it be okay to try it once?

Some time passed by. The distressed Lee Gun-woo finally opened his mouth.

“...Cough. For Min-young’s sake, I guess I can listen to your story.”

“As long as you have the offerings, all the things necessary for the cleansing will be prepared.”

Min-young clapped happily at Gun-woo’s response.

“Right? I told you it wasn’t fake. Hwanin is the real thing.”

Gun-woo involuntarily nodded.

Song Chi-hyun smiled at the sight. It had been a long time since the play had been so perfectly completed. He had been scamming people for years. They used it to secure hundreds of believers, but this was the first time it was perfected. There wasn’t a chance of getting unknown information from outside.

It was true that money wasn’t important. As long as they gained the person’s faith, they had obtained the life of that person.

Now Pungbaek and Unsa would put the finishing touches on the scam. Then the remaining person...

Song Chi-hyun looked at the man who came with Lee Gun-woo. He was a high school maths teacher. That was the only information they got.

However, this was enough for today. A believer's family member had been brought in to Sun. In most cases, the remaining family members would also follow.

Then Tae-hyuk, who had been quietly watching the situation, slowly came forward.

“Lee Gun-woo. Can you please wait a moment?”

“Huh?”

“I still haven't achieved my purpose for coming here.”

Everybody's gaze focused on Tae-hyuk.

---

Pungbaek and Unsa frowned at Tae-hyuk.

They were still a little immature compared to Song Chi-hyun, whose poker face was perfect.

“Didn't Kim Cheol-su come to find your little brother? Hwanin said that he couldn't find him. ‘Kim Sung-soo’ isn't here.”

According to the information obtained, his little brother Kim Sung-soo wasn't here. He probably got caught by some other cult. This person had found the wrong address.

Just in case, Song Chi-hyun had thought of some measures about his brother's whereabouts. It could be used to fool him.

"I'm sorry but I didn't come here to find my little brother. I thought I should destroy the man who is tricking my followers."

"Huh? What does that mean?"

Tae-hyuk slowly licked his lips.

He could use the fact that his opponent proclaimed himself a god. Among those gathered here, only five people knew that this church was a scam. The rest were followed and really believed they were following a god. Then the most effective way to use that...

Tae-hyuk activated a crime skill.

[Disguise has been used.]

-Your appearance has changed to Song Chi-hyun.

In an instant, Tae-hyuk's face changed into another person. The people who saw it shrieked.

“Aaaaack!”

“W-Whatttttt!”

“F-Face, his face changed!”

“There are two Usa's!”

The shadow behind the curtain shook like he was also confused.

Tae-hyuk used a crime skill before opening his mouth.

[Voice Modulation has been used.]

-You can imitate the voice of Kim Bum-soo.

Now his voice was dignified.

“Unsa! How dare you use the name of Hwanin!”

“W-What...”

“I am Pungbaek. I received the name from Hwanin and brought rain to the world when I followed Hwanung!”

“O-Oh my god...”

Tae-hyuk’s plan was very simple.

Reveal the true colors of the one pretending to be a god.



## Chapter 126 – Swallow The Sun #4

---

“I will give up this falsehood and show you my true image.”

Lee Gun-woo and the believers were affected by the incense. Counterfeit was a crime skill that changed the form of things and made them look different. The same could also be applied to gases.

‘Make the scent a cloud.’

The fragrance, which hadn’t been visible until now, wrapped around Tae-hyuk like a cloud.

“C-Cloud...!”

“He is clearly Pungbaek who has the abilities to create clouds!”

“Waaaaahhhhh!”

The crowd of believers shouted. Up to this point, it was the best magic. Taoist magic. No, he needed a bit more to bring it to the realm of Taoist magic.

First of all, he disguised himself as Kim Hyun-do, the director of the art museum who had a curious atmosphere. He changed his clothes to those worn in a Gojoseon drama. It actually didn’t matter what clothing he wore. It was enough if he could overwhelm them with the atmosphere.

‘There is a lot of smoke in the room that blurs judgment. I will use everything I can!’

Tae-hyuk moved the clouds around his body towards the believers. The bishops seemed familiar with the smoke, but the believers were different. There were those who bowed or wailed like a child.

Tae-hyuk looked at the curtain. The situation meant that the king had to come out.

Some time passed by.

The leader, who had never been seen before, slowly walked forward.

---

The man had a corpse-like face. He had pale white skin. Unfocused pupils. White lips. It felt like opening a coffin and looking at the person inside. He didn’t seem like a living person at all. It was difficult to guess his age because there were no fine lines on his face.

But although he pretended to be as calm as possible, he couldn’t hide his fingers shaking with tension. He opened his mouth with a veneer of calm,

“Are you really Pungbaek?”

It was a clear question.

Tae-hyuk narrowed his eyes and looked at the leader. He knew how much pressure silence would give in this situation, so he decided to use it moderately.

The reason why Tae-hyuk proclaimed himself as Pungbaek was simple. Unlike Unsa and Usa who were called masters, Pungbaek was the head of the 3,000 followers and was called Earl. He was called Wind Master, Verve, Rain master, Head of a Thousand Arms, etc. However, his most famous title was Pungbaek.

“Despite going through hundreds of rebirths through the cycle of life and death, have you forgotten the face of the firstborn?”

The dignified figure was literally the God of Wind.

“...T-Then show me the evidence. This isn't enough to prove that you are Pungbaek.”

It was one of the bishops who attacked first. He asked Tae-hyuk to prove that he was truly Pungbaek in order to raise doubts. It was the modus operandi of those who pretended to have powers.

“Maybe it has been too long. As long as the sun exists, the wind, rain and clouds will forever repeat their lives and deaths. It is no wonder that Usa doesn't remember me.”

He felt goosebumps form as he continued talking in the tone of a historical drama. However, it was why he used Kim Bum-soo's voice. He could now speak for several hours.

Tae-hyuk waved his hands and the clouds moved along with his body. Repeatedly using Counterfeit was very tiring, but the effect was enormous.

“Usa and Unsa are unsatisfied with the human body and repeated the cycle of reincarnation. And now the name of the leader is clearly...”

He paused for a moment, heightening the atmosphere. Then he slowly called the opponent's name.

“Cho Min-hyuk.”

“.....!”

Cho Min-hyuk's calm face suddenly distorted.

“There is no need to be surprised, but your people seem to be carrying a little bit of dirt.”

Tae-hyuk walked lightly to Song Chi-hyun and touched his shoulders. It was a soft touch, like a massage.

‘Robbery!’

At the same time, a sharp knife appeared in Tae-hyuk’s hands.

“Hueeok!”

Song Chi-hyun groaned like he had seen a ghost. The knife had been hidden in his clothes. Yet the other person took it just by lightly touching his body. He wouldn’t have believed it if he hadn’t seen it directly with his own eyes. It wasn’t a technique that humans could show.

Moreover, this wasn’t the end. Tae-hyuk turned the knife a few times like he was shaking off the dust, then stabbed it in Song Chi-hyun’s belly.

Hwaaaaaack!

“Kwaaaaack!”

At the unexpected attack, Song Chi-hyun grabbed his bloody belly and collapsed.

“W-What?”

“Pungbaek attacked Usa!”

“Ah, no, he clearly said that Hwanin... Is that Usa fake?”

“Was he killed because he is a fake? Ah, he is still alive!”

“What is going on?”

Tae-hyuk laughed and replied,

“You don’t have to worry. I did this as a demonstration.”

Tae-hyuk beckoned to the believers near Song Chi-hyun.

“Take off his robe.”

“Huh? Ah, yes!”

The scared believers stripped off Song Chi-hyun’s heavy robes. They saw the blood that spurted from the stab wound. Then there were alarmed screams!

“H-He is dead!”

“P-Pungbaek! Please have mercy!”

“Pungbaek!”

Tae-hyuk stretched out his hand towards Song Chi-hyun. The cloud surrounding his body spread towards Song Chi-hyun. Then a miracle happened.

“W-What am I seeing now...?”

“The wound is healed!”

“Ahh, P-Pungbaek. It is really Pungbaek...!”

Song Chi-hyun groaned and sat up. He touched his belly with a bewildered look.

“H-Heok! W-What? Wasn’t I obviously stabbed by a knife?”

The believers were stunned by the sight and there were those who even fainted. Song Chi-hyun looked over at the celestial being. Yes, celestial being. He was a real celestial being.

“R-R-R-Rea...!”

He was so agitated that words couldn’t come out properly.

When they first met, he thought the other person was just a high school teacher. However, he had changed into a god. A miracle occurred that was different from the scam they had been doing so far.

One hand could control wind and clouds, and the other could treat fatal injuries. He was literally a heavenly being from the stories. Song Chi-hyun unknowingly fell to his knees.

‘If I expose them as fake, then I can break the Sun Cult. But then I won’t be able to get what I want. Now...’

He had acted a perfect play. The bishops and believers thought he was Pungbaek. He could dismantle Sun with simple words.

But before that, there was information he needed to obtain. The play couldn’t finish yet.

Tae-hyuk said with a stern expression,

“You seem to be misunderstanding something. I didn’t come here to punish anyone.”

“W-What?”

Tae-hyuk slowly looked at the leader.

He accumulated followers by becoming the object of faith.

“It was three years ago that Cho Min-hyuk found Usa’s powers and memories. On September 17. After that, he started looking for his brothers and sisters.”



It was exactly when Sun was created. If the leader denied the words, then it was like confessing this was a scam. He had no choice but to agree to the nonsense.

“All the believers gathered here in the name of Hwanin. It is reported that you wish to return to being human.”

Tae-hyuk stopped for a moment and looked at the leader. If he didn't want the scam to be revealed, then he needed to talk. However, a strange answer was heard.

“A-Am I really Usa?”

Tae-hyuk's play was so plausible that even the leader was completely deceived. Tae-hyuk inwardly laughed.

‘You shouldn't forget. Ah...’

He had to continue until the end.

“Are you remembering now, Usa? I came here to check if you have recovered your memories.”

“Cough...”

“Don't get confused. The cycle of reincarnation has repeated for thousands of years, so it is natural to be like this.”

“.....”

“At first, I came to confirm that you are well. But it seems that while Usa was trying to find your siblings, you called the wrong things.”

“W-What are you saying?”

“Hwanung sealed the numerous evil spirits in the world. Nothing lasts forever in front of time. Even though Hwanung’s technique is great, he can’t keep them sealed up forever. It will gradually leak and disappear naturally. The evil spirits were attracted to all of you and gathered here. This amount is too large to be purified by itself.”

“Do you mean there are a lot of evil spirits here?”

“I don’t think Usa’s abilities and memories are perfect yet. If everybody here isn’t cleansed quickly, then their lives will be at stake.”

“.....!”

The believers that listened to Tae-hyuk’s words collapsed on the spot. They had gathered here to serve Hwanin. But due to that, the evil spirits had gathered. They never even imagined.

“You don’t have to worry. Isn’t Pungbaek right in front of you? I will do the purification ceremony myself.”

Tears flowed from the eyes of the moved believers.

“T-Thank you. Pungbaek!”

“Thank you!”

Tae-hyuk moved his gaze from the believers towards the leader.

“How about it? Will you help me?”

“I-I will help. Pungbaek.”

The fake Pungbaek next to the leader said,

“L-Lord...”

“I’m sorry but this is the end of your role. He is the real Pungbaek.”

Thus, everything about the cult was handed over to Tae-hyuk. Tae-hyuk watched them and muttered in a small voice,

“I’ll eat well.”

## Chapter 127 – Swallow The Sun #5

---

In the base of the Sun Cult, there was a secret room that ordinary people couldn't enter. It was called the Temple of Heaven, and no one could enter except for the leader and the bishops. It was full of things that couldn't be shown to other people.

In this place, Cho Min-hyuk and the three bishops were looking at each other with blank faces. They still didn't know if what they saw was a reality or a dream.

Song Chi-hyun, who was the oldest of the bishops, and had been there since the Sun Cult started three years old, opened his mouth first.

“Surely we weren't drugged?”

It wasn't hard to believe. They had used all types of tricks to deceive the believers. They got information about the other person in an unnoticeable manner and used it to know of their past. They figured out the people's concerns or any illnesses they had.

Song Chi-hyun had 10 years of experience as a magician. Most of the tricks that the cult used came from his head. He used magic to create miracles such as levitating in air or removing a tumor from his abdomen. In other words, they were tricks that came from the head. It was quite good.

In the end, Sun became one of the nation's top religious groups just three years after its creation. But now the real thing

appeared...

Park Bum-ho, who was treated as the fake Pungbaek after the real one appeared, said,

“L-Leader... He really...”

He was particularly agitated.

“Damn. No matter how I look at it, he is real.”

“I-Isn’t it the setting that I made?”

“Huu...”

Park Bum-ho was a manhwa writer whose work didn’t sell. He prepared a story based on Gojoseon, but he hadn’t been able to find an artist, so he plunged into suffering. That’s when the leader scouted him.

Although many parts of Park Bum-ho’s setting were awkward, he had the strange power to attract people. In particular, he was an expert at penetrating the mentality of a person.

“Pungbaek’s abilities could be set up. In particular, we had a plan to change the face and clothes that hadn’t been revealed yet.”

In order to actually do it, they needed to figure out a way to change the mask on the face in an instant. Unsa Kim Jin-woo, who was in charge of the camera installation and eavesdropping, gave his opinion.

“...I analyzed the footage of that person. I couldn’t find any traces of a trick.”

Cho Min-hyuk asked Song Chi-hyun to show them his belly and looked closely. The image of a vast amount of blood spurting from it could still be seen in their minds. However, the wound was like he had never been stabbed at all.

Cho Min-hyuk asked,

“You didn’t pretend to be stabbed with a fake knife right? There also wasn’t plastic bag of blood either, right?”

“Yes... I can guarantee it. I was clearly stabbed by a knife. If you take a closer look, my blood stains are still here.”

Song Chi-hyun showed them the knife that had stabbed him. The blood had disappeared, but the traces still remained.

“Damn... What the hell...?”

Did a celestial being really appear in the setting that Park Bum-ho created? Fortunately, the person hadn’t said that they were fakes. They were just worried about how Sun would operate in the

future.

“Leader. First, let’s assume that he really is a celestial being.”

“I think this is right.”

The leaders came to a conclusion at the end of an one hour meeting. First of all, they would cooperate with the heavenly being as much as possible. They couldn’t give up the Sun group. It was literally the goose that laid the golden egg.

At first, they asked the believers to give up the goods they had accumulated. Then they could get some peace of mind. However, that didn’t last long.

It was natural. It was because they lived an unhappy life that they joined the cult in the first place. Just removing the cause wouldn’t stop them from feeling unhappy. Then they would once again have to give something up in order to get some rest. Thus, an endless chain began.

Once the berries were ripe, they would be harvested.

Song Chi-hyun said,

“The good news is that the celestial being treats Leader-nim as a fellow god.”

“It really is fortunate. At that moment, I really thought I was the reincarnation of a celestial being. No, maybe...”

“Leader, I’m sorry but let’s start with the worst case scenario. Maybe you will have to hand over your position to him.”

“Hrmm...”

The leader being advised to retire from his position. It wasn’t a pleasant feeling.

“There is one good thing. Pungbaek doesn’t have the ability to read a person’s mind. You know what that means.”

Song Chi-hyun listened to the leader’s words and muttered,

“We can fool him?”

“Yes. That person is looking for other celestial beings. We can use that as an excuse to expand Sun.”

The bishops nodded at their leader, who managed to turn the crisis of retirement around.

“You want to create a huge group.”

“That’s right. Think about it realistically. That person really can



use divine techniques. Imagine if he became the leader and showed the miracles in front of all of the believers.”

“Haah...”

“Woo...”

The news would spread and many new spectators would come to see the heavenly being.

It would work. It had to work.

Right now, they only had 1,200 believers. That could increase by 10, no 100 or even 1,000 times.

“Even if it is only half...”

“What do you think about my idea?”

The scammers raised their thumbs.

---

As the group was plotting, Tae-hyuk was preoccupied with other things. He needed to find definite proof that the Sun Cult was related to the Yakuza. First of all, he decided to check the incense, since that was the only connection point.

He asked the person who moved the supplies and found out that there was a warehouse they were stored in. The guard was someone who hadn't been able to attend the rally a few hours ago. He sat in his chair and played on his smartphone, as if he didn't know that a real celestial being had appeared.

Tae-hyuk used Disguise to turn into Song Chi-hyun. Although his height was a little shorter, a man's height could change depending on the situation.

“Hum hum.”

Tae-hyuk coughed and the guard raised his head with an annoyed expression. Then he used as he realized that Bishop Song Chi-hyun was in front of him.

“B-B-B-Bishop-nim!”

His reaction was like a soldier meeting his commanding officer while he had been dozing off.

“You went through a lot of trouble. I need more incense at the rally.”

“I-Is that so? Normally the others come directly...”

“I am tired from waking up at dawn. I thought a walk would be good for me so don't think too hard. Then can I go in?”

The guard could only say one thing in response.

“Yes! You worked hard!”

The guard bowed low, like a broken robot. He wouldn't be brave enough to take a look inside.

The warehouse was filled with a variety of props, like it was the set of a historical drama.

“I can film a drama with the things here.”

The incense wasn't difficult to find.

However, the contents were empty.

“Hrmm...”

It seemed like he would have to use Spying to determine if there was a secret space. Tae-hyuk activated the crime skill.

‘Spying!’

Then the screen of the Demon Revealing Mirror flashed in front of Tae-hyuk. Information about the objects in the room were written down. This was the ability of the Hawk Eyes attribute.

“Here.”

Tae-hyuk approached a jar placed in a corner of the room. A safe was hidden behind it.

“This won’t open without fingerprint recognition.”

First of all, he gained Cho Min-hyuk’s fingerprints using Counterfeit. However, there was no reaction from the safe.

Next he tried Song Chi-hyun and Park Bum-ho.

“It looks like Kim Jin-woo is in charge of this.”

He used the thumbprint of Kim Jin-woo and the safe door opened with a loud clunk.

Tae-hyuk smiled.

Recently, the number of fingerprint recognition safes had increased over the dial or lock type. It was much harder for other thieves, but Tae-hyuk was the opposite.

‘I don’t have the skill to pick a lock yet. I’m feel sorry since I’m always getting its help, so I should buy some stock in companies that make fingerprint recognition locks.’

Tae-hyuk looked into the safe and as he thought, there was a glass bottle of perfume.

He sniffed the sweet scent. It was definitely ‘that.’

“Then let’s see the source of this.”

Tae-hyuk pulled out a notebook and pencil. He would prefer a proper easel or drawing sheet but there was no time.

“Then Forgery...!”

[The Forgery skill has found an intense image.]

[The work has been completed through automatic mode.]

The familiar intense illusion appeared in front of Tae-hyuk’s eyes. It was the hidden ability of Forgery that helped him many times. The secret deal between the Yakuza and bishops was drawn inside the notebook. The atmosphere was enough to use it as a poster for a crime movie.

“Bingo. The Yakuza was behind the Sun Cult.”

Tae-hyuk was able to close the notebook when he saw someone

drawn in the corner. He looked like he was in control of the transaction, but he felt strangely familiar.

“Hrmm... This person...”

Anyway, he could ask the bishops if he was curious. Tae-hyuk took the perfume from the safe and quietly left the warehouse. He had everything he wanted.

Now it was time to strike.

---

Tae-hyuk took the appearance of the celestial being and gave orders to the leader and bishops. He told them to gather the members of Sun into a room so that he could introduce himself formally.

It would be the celestial being's first public appearance. The cult leaders who heard this couldn't help laughing.

“T-Those words...”

“Yes. It is my job to look after the members here. I can't promise forever, but I will lead them as long as possible.”

Kim Jin-woo murmured in a touched tone,

“P-Pungbaek...”

Then Song Chi-hyun said,

“Pungbaek. It is sad but there are still many believers who don’t believe that Pungbaek is a celestial being. Then can you please show us a miracle again?”

“Of course.”

“Ohh... T-Thank you. So I will get it ready.”

Tae-hyuk laughed and didn’t say anything.

The bishops accepted and the rally to introduce ‘Pungbaek’ was organized in an instant. Thousands of believers gathered in an auditorium. Rumours of Pungbaek started to spread among them.

It was all staged by Song Chi-hyun.

“Aren’t we gathered today to be introduced to the real Pungbaek?”

“Eh? So the Pungbaek we met until now...?”

“He was just a proxy while the real Pungbaek was away. Maybe he will get another position?”

“I see. Then what will Pungbaek show us?”

The believers looked up at the podium with excited faces as their expectations grew. Then Song Chi-hyun appeared on stage.

“I am here to introduce you to Pungbaek, who has been ruling the winds of the world for thousands of years.”

It was like he was introducing a magician. But the public was excited about the obvious direction.

“Eh? The clouds...”

“P-Pungbaek!”

The clouds gathered together on stage and revealed one person. It seemed like a figure from the myths was appearing. It was enough to cause the crowd in the auditorium to cheer. Some followers even shed tears.

“It is really Pungbaek...”

“P-Pungbaek! Please save us!”

“Please lead us, Pungbaek!”



Tae-hyuk walked towards the microphone on the stage. He truly was like a magician.

‘I am a magician without a stage crew.’

Tae-hyuk clicked his tongue.

“After thousands of years, I am able to appear in front of you thanks to Hwanin. I...”

Tae-hyuk stopped for a moment and looked at the crowd. They were gazing at Tae-hyuk with hopeful eyes as they wished for a miracle. Even though thousands of people were gathered, it was so quiet that not even the sound of breathing could be heard.

‘I will give them a miracle like they wished. However, it will be a little different from what they want.’

Tae-hyuk slowly opened his mouth and said...

---

“Once Pungbaek opened his mouth, the Sun group was literally decimated. Isn’t this a miracle?”

Tae-hyuk smiled as he left the auditorium.

He told the believers that the leader and bishops were fakes. Once

he recalled what happened in there, his stomach hurt again.

Who would have imagined? Ridiculous words had emerged from the mouth of the person called the celestial being.

“Get the scammer!”

“That bastard is running away!”

Several hundred people were running around the building trying to catch Tae-hyuk, but they couldn't find any signs of him.

‘Originally I didn't look like that.’

He released the disguise of the celestial being. Then he pretended to be searching as well.

‘Surely they won't notice that two of the same people are searching. I won't have to worry about it if I enter another building.’

Tae-hyuk pretended to be searching while looking at the Demon Revealing Mirror. Then he muttered,

“This has definitely changed the fate of the Sun group. Then give me the reward.”

How many affinity points would he get?

Tae-hyuk stared at the Demon Revealing Mirror.

## Chapter 128 – Mister Park's Identity #1

---

He pulled out the Demon Revealing Mirror and checked the message.

[317 affinity points have been acquired.]

[You can use the affinity points to enhance crime skills or activate hidden attributes.]

‘317 affinity points?!’

Until now, he had mainly only received around 10 at a time. It was the first time he obtained so many points in one go.

‘My prediction was right. I get affinity points for changing someone's fate.’

It was rare for people to lose their lives after getting involved with Sun. Despite that, he gained more than 300 points so Tae-hyuk's hypothesis was correct.

‘Then how should I use these points?’

He could strengthen all the skills he had. However, Tae-hyuk hadn't received any new skills since he had acquired Illegal

Surgery. The more skills that Tae-hyuk added, the wider range of things that he could do.

Tae-hyuk manipulated the Demon Revealing Mirror. Then a special menu that wasn't usually seen popped up.

[Platinum Draw Chance!]

-You can obtain various skills by using 10 affinity points.

-It is possible to acquire skills that aren't available due to the low rank.

-The more you draw in a row, the more points that will be consumed.

After becoming a Noble, the points consumed had returned to its original value.

‘Yes. I should use the points to learn a few new skills. Preferably, something that increases my attack power.’

The only skill he could use for fighting was Violence, using the iron pipe. He was confident that he could win against any opponent using Damage to Both Sides. It was too weak to be used in a one versus many situation. In order to fight the mafia in the future, he needed a better skill.

Tae-hyuk thought that and carefully pressed the button.

The roulette on the Demon Revealing Mirror started spinning. There were cheerful sound effects as he received the message that he got a new skill.

[Crime Skill: Vehicle Theft has been acquired.]

-Anything with an engine can be freely used by holding the handle.

-The ability will be affected by your dexterity.

“I-It is subtle...”

It was a skill that could be utilized in various ways, but it wasn't the ability that he desired.

“...One more draw.”

He was able to gain another skill by consuming 100 points.

“I could do more if I had 1,000 points.”

The problem was, what skill would he get next? He wanted a decent combat skill. Tae-hyuk once again tried the platinum challenge.

This time, he clicked the button very carefully. A huge 100 points. He could've invested this in Voice Modulation or Counterfeit.

He gulped nervously as he looked at the Demon Revealing Mirror. There were cheerful sound effects as he received the message that he got a new skill.

[Crime Skill: Shooting Spree has been acquiring.]

-You can handle various firearms freely.

-For 100 affinity points, you can learn the attribute Bullet Time.

“W-What? This is a j-j-jackpot!”

Tae-hyuk, who had been watching the Demon Revealing Mirror nervously, let out an excited cheer. He had acquired a combat skill. Furthermore, he had the guns that he took from Big Brother. He didn't have a lot of bullets, but they would do well as secret weapons.

However, there was an uneasy part about the message in the Demon Revealing Mirror.

“Bullet Time? It is a named attribute.”

Among the attributes, there were those with unique names such as Hawk Eyes, Damage to Both Sides, and Sixth Sense. Unlike other skill attributes, a large number of points were consumed, but the performance was enormous.

Tae-hyuk decided to check the description of Bullet Time. It was a buff-type skill that could only be activated with firearms.

“...Accelerated thinking?”

When Bullet Time was cast, everything except for Tae-hyuk’s consciousness moved 100 times slower. One moment could feel like eternity.

“Whoa...”

He unknowingly exclaimed. It had a limit of only one minute a day, but it was a tremendous skill. In particular, it would show great synergy with Sixth Sense that allowed him to read the enemy’s attacks.

Tae-hyuk looked at the Bullet Time attribute. He could get it by moving one finger. Although he had to spend 100 points on the attribute, it was worth it.



“This isn’t a worker’s salary, but one that should be used immediately.”

Once he learned the Bullet Time attribute, he would have 107 points left. He would leave 50 points and spend the rest on the features he wanted.

“Increase the duration of the Counterfeit skill. Make Forgery more complete. Increase the range and accuracy of Robbery...”

In addition, increase the time he had to cancel Illegal Surgery and other attributes. He supplemented all of the crime skills that he had obtained so far.

“Now it is finished...!”

With this, Tae-hyuk had 10 crime skills. He had become so powerful that he couldn’t be compared to the past.

“Then the only thing left is to secure the scammers.”

Tae-hyuk closed the screen of the Demon Revealing Mirror with a satisfied face and hid himself in the darkness.

---

Song Chi-hyun stepped back into a corner of the auditorium and

said in a dignified voice.

“Pungbaek will speak. So everybody, listen carefully.”

Song Chi-hyun looked anxiously at Pungbaek.

The words that came from his mouth would decide the future of ‘Sun’. Of course, the leader wasn’t a fool, so he would give up his position if he had to. The believers in the auditorium listened to Pungbaek’s speech with tense expressions.

“After thousands of years, I am able to appear in front of you thanks to Hwanin. I...”

The faces of the believers filled with surprise. Clouds rushed around Pungbaek, creating a mysterious atmosphere. The appearance of a man who literally controlled the wind. It couldn’t possibly be a trick or gimmick. Furthermore, he was talking to half-brainwashed believers.

In order to break them, Pungbaek would have to announce that he was a fake. Pungbaek laughed and said words that no one expected.

“...am a fake.”

The believers showed a violent reaction to Pungbaek’s words.

“Oooooof!”

Cho Min-hyuk, who was drinking tea in the audience with a calm expression, spilled the tea he was drinking.

“W-W-What?!”

Kim Jin-woo and Park Bum-ho fell down where they were standing. Song Chi-hyun maintained his calm and tried to fix the situation.

“Ha, ha, ha. Pungbaek really... Even in this situation, you don’t lose your wit.”

Tae-hyuk smiled and placed his fingers at his chin. Then the special makeup that had been fully assimilated to his skin was peeled off and his original face revealed. The believers who saw it shrieked.

“W-What the? A costume?!”

The face behind the special makeup clearly looked like a criminal. It was the appearance of Kim Cheol-su from Blue Dragon Prison. His face was scary enough to cause the believers to shrink back. It was reasonable since the believers didn’t have immunity to such things.

Tae-hyuk spoke into the microphone with a relaxed expression.

“Huhuhu... My conscience is pricked by those who are pretending to be gods. My face was changed due to special disguise makeup. The clouds are nothing but a superconductor that binds water vapour.”

Even after hearing such words, one of the faithful believers shouted,

“If everything is a scam, how did they know my history? Hwanin can obviously see the past, present and future. How else can you explain it?”

Tae-hyuk used the iron pipe to stop the bishops and pressed something. Then on one side of the auditorium, the projector screen descended.

“T-T-This bastard!”

The embarrassed bishops headed towards Tae-hyuk but the believers were staring at the screen. It was showing videos from the secret cameras installed in the cafe and convenience store. Among the recorded footage, there were videos of believers who were here now.

“I-Isn’t that me?”

“That is the story of my childhood! Didn’t he pretend to have the power to know this?”

“Aren’t they complete con artists?”

But this wasn’t the end. Tae-hyuk pressed a button again and more evidence of the scam popped up.

In the end, Song Chi-hyun realized that this situation couldn’t be rectified. He quietly spoke to his colleagues standing behind him.

“First of all, we should get out of here. Shit. That bastard hit us in the back...”

He wanted to stop Tae-hyuk but the water had already been spilled.

“.....”

However, his colleagues didn’t reply. Song Chi-hyun gulped and slowly looked back. Kim Jin-woo and Park Bum-ho couldn’t be seen at all.

“...Those bastards ran away!”

The other bishops and the leader had escaped the auditorium in the turmoil. Song Chi-hyun looked at the believers surrounding him with a flustered expression.

“You have scammed us.

“Huh? I brought all my possessions to you. That was a trick?”

“I won’t be able to close my eyes if I don’t hit you now. Everyone pounce!”

Song Chi-hyun was stunned and lost consciousness.

---

The sweating Park Bum-ho opened his eyes in the darkness. He told Kim Jin-woo who was sitting next to him.

“Sunbae... I had an unbelievably strange dream. Pungbaek appeared in my setting, then Pungbaek revealed to all the believers what we did.”

Cho Min-hyuk, who was sitting behind him, aimed a high kick towards Park Bum-ho’s side.

“This brat fainted in the middle and thought it was a dream? What? A dream? Dreaaam? Fuck... I hope it is all a dream...”

“Kuooh.”

Park Bum-ho realized that it wasn’t a dream, but something that happened a few hours ago.

Kim Jin-woo said,

“Leader. What should we do now?”

“Stop calling me leader. Are you still saying that in this situation?”

“Ah, yes...”

“At any rate, we have to escape from this place. It is like how the people were enraged at the king and queen during the French Revolution. They clearly feel anger towards us.”

Kim Jin-woo trembled as he got goose bumps.

“Chief. What should we do now?” There are many believers out there. If I knew this then I would’ve made a secret passageway...”

The total number of believers was over 1,000. They would keep hiding like this, but they would soon be discovered.

“We are trapped rats... But who the hell is that bastard? No matter how I looked, he was real.”

“I-it seemed like it. The thing he did in front of us, it wasn’t special makeup.”

“Yes, I know of only one person who can freely change their face...”

At that moment, Cho Min-hyuk fell silent as he got goose bumps and swallowed his saliva. There was one person who could change his face. He was definitely a famous criminal in the country.

“D-Don’t tell me...”

The appearance of the phantom masked person appeared in his head. It was at that moment.

“This truly is a predicament.”

Someone’s voice was heard from behind them.

Cho Min-hyuk cried out,

“W-Who are you?”

Then something white came closer. It was the mask worn by the main character of the Phantom of the Opera. And the criminal wearing it was clearly.

“You mean me? I am Phantom.”

Phantom appeared in front of the scammers.



## Chapter 129 – Mister Park's Identity #2

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Cho Min-hyuk looked at the person who magically appeared with a blank expression. Then he shouted as he realized who they were.

“Y-Y-Y-You...!”

The mask only covered the upper part of the face. Therefore, the scammers could see Phantom's expression. He looked down at them with a smile. In a dark room with no light, the white mask worn by Phantom gave off an eerie atmosphere.

Cho Min-hyuk gulped as cold sweat flowed down his chin. Phantom said,

“Aren't you missing a person?”

Then Kim Jin-woo screamed indignantly,

“Song Chi-hyun was caught by the believers! W-Whose fault do you think it is?!”

“It is karma for deceiving all the believers over the years. You can't be like a politician and blame others.”

“This bastard...”

Kim Jin-woo gazed at Phantom like he wanted to strike. He

touched the cutlery that was secretly hidden. The person in front of them was a criminal that even the special forces couldn't catch. In addition, according to the Oyabun, Phantom was the one who handled the notorious Big Brother killer sent by the Triads. They wouldn't be able to live if they attacked him.

Damn... If he knew this then he would've brought a gun.

While Kim Jin-woo and Park Bum-ho were thinking about how to fight that monster...

Cho Min-hyuk quickly regained his cool and opened his mouth,

“You aren't as big as the rumors. There would've been tremendous benefits if you hadn't destroyed the cult. With those abilities, you could easily be the head of a religious cult. Being called a god by millions of people...”

Tae-hyuk smiled and interrupted Cho Min-hyuk,

“I don't have a particular reason for shattering Sun. I'm sorry but you just caught my eyes.”

“Y-You kicked the pumpkin for that reason?!”

“Actually, what I care about are the pumpkin leaves.”

“...What does that mean?”

Tae-hyuk beckoned them to come closer. The cult leaders were overwhelmed by the atmosphere given off by Phantom and quietly gathered around.

“I will summarize your situation in simple terms. The leader gathered a talented magician, a writer, and an engineer to create the pseudo-religion Sun. Your abilities showed a strange synergy and the group increased at a rapid pace.”

The cult leaders stared dumbly. Phantom’s words were all true. He really seemed to have a technique to read people’s minds.

“Then someone passing by smashed the plate. Well, let’s say that all the accumulated evil spirits exploded.”

Tae-hyuk laughed as he saw Kim Jin-woo’s face distorting. Anyone who had their profit machine broken in front of them would react in a similar way. Cho Min-hyuk stopped the agitated Kim Jin-woo from rushing towards Tae-hyuk and said.

“You didn’t come here just to tease us. It seems like you want something.”

He realized that they weren’t a match for Phantom. Cho Min-hyuk’s tone towards Phantom had become quite cautious.

“You noticed quickly. Is this how you were the leader for several years? Yes. What I want is a deal. Right now, the fanatics are

aiming for you. They are searching and will discover you in a few minutes. What would happen then? Personally, I think the correct answer is either an Oriental Express style murder case or the French Revolution.”

Cho Min-hyuk started sweating at the conclusions.

“So let’s skip the complicated story. I have a suggestion. I will help you guys escape from here. Instead, answer a question for me. Isn’t it very simple?”

“...What will happen if I lie?”

“You can say whatever your like, but there might be a punishment after you are free.”

“.....”

“For reference, I want to know about the ‘Yakuza’ who are behind you.”

“.....!!!”

Cho Min-hyuk controlled his expression, but the other two turned white like ghosts.

“If that was a question then I would’ve read the answer from your expressions.”

“Kuhuk...”

Tae-hyuk spread both hands out and declared,

“Come, choose. The Yakuza in the distance, or Phantom in front of you. Your fates will be changed depending on your choice.”

---

Cho Min-hyuk was worried.

He had to accept Phantom’s offer in order to survive. The issue was that Phantom wanted information on the Yakuza. If he made the wrong choice then he could meet a group of lions while trying to escape a tiger.

However, he couldn’t reject. Without Phantom’s help, it would be difficult to get out of here alive. Then what should he do?

In the end, Cho Min-hyuk came to a conclusion. First of all, he decided to see what Phantom could do for them.

“...It isn’t enough to just escape from here. If the Yakuza finds out that I spoke to you about them then it will be hard for me to survive after leaving here. I’d rather...”

“There will be an after-sales service. Don’t worry. I’ve already

thought about that.”

Cho Min-hyuk smiled as he answer he wanted emerged from Phantom’s mouth.

“Hoh, that means...”

“Yes. I’ll send you to a place where the Yakuza absolutely can’t touch you. Once there, you can do the same thing that you are doing now. Of course, it can be hard starting from the beginning, so I will go and help you a few times if you want. Is this enough?”

“Hrmm...”

The conditions weren’t perfect, but Cho Min-hyuk decided to be satisfied with this much. A lot of their earnings were siphoned off to the Yakuza. If they took advantage of Phantom’s power, then they could get a lot more revenue than they were right now.

Cho Min-hyuk asked for confirmation.

“Will we really be in a place where the Yakuza can’t reach us?”

“Yes. I promise for sure. Don’t worry about it.”

“What about the profits we earn? Do we have to give you a share?”

“Of course it is all yours.”

Unlike the Yakuza, his services were free. If that was the case, this might be a huge jackpot. Yes, they were simply changing clients. Didn't this sort of thing happen frequently?

Cho Min-hyuk slowly reached out his hand.

“I understand Phantom. I will accept the offer. I will be happy to tell you all I know. Then we are business partners.”

“Business partners. You can say that.”

Tae-hyuk smiled with satisfaction and shook Cho Min-hyuk's hand. Thus, the cult leaders made an alliance with the criminal called Phantom.

Cho Min-hyuk told Tae-hyuk everything he knew about the Yakuza. The contents that emerged from his mouth was half expected.

Japan was a country where numerous cults existed. Of course, many of them were backed by the Yakuza. Cho Min-hyuk was a Korean but he had grown up in a Japanese cult since childhood. Then a Yakuza executive saw his talent and made a suggestion.

‘Create a cult in South Korea. I will give you support for it.’

The goal was to use the followers to do things behind the scenes. Therefore, Cho Min-hyuk decided to go to South Korea where he could be the leader of a cult. And over time, Cho Min-hyuk became the leader of the Sun Cult.

“It seems like the Yakuza are planning something in South Korea.”

It wasn't much different from the Triads. Drug growing, organ trafficking, etc. Those things couldn't be done in their country.

Tae-hyuk extended his notebook. It was the drawing of the strangely familiar man wearing black sunglasses. Cho Min-hyuk might know who he was.

“Oh, it is too small so I don't know if this is correct. That is Mister Park.”

“Mister Park?”

Tae-hyuk narrowed his eyes and muttered the name. It was the same title that he found in the Blue Dragon Prison warden's notes. Was it simply a coincidence?

“Yes. An agent of the Oyabun. Most of the orders come through him. I also trade the necessary supplies through Mister Park.”

“I see. Do you know anything else about him?”



“Only that he is Korean... Oh, I will notify you if he ever contacts me. But you won’t be able to meet him unless I contact you personally.”

In other words, Phantom wouldn’t be able to meet Mister Park without his help. Tae-hyuk laughed and said,

“Don’t worry about that.”

“H-Heok!”

Cho Min-hyuk felt goose bumps at suddenly hearing his voice from the other person. Once again, he realized how his opponent was.

“For your mental health, I won’t take off this mask.”

“T-Thank you.”

Cho Min-hyuk wasn’t that familiar with the Yakuza. Most of his information was useless. However, he was a person with contacts to Mister Park. If he used Cho min-hyuk’s voice and face, it was possible to meet with him.

“It seems like we can’t stay in here much longer. Shall we leave?”

Tae-hyuk quietly led them out of the room. The encirclement of

the believers was imminent.

“This is a blueprint of the building. If you follow the escape route that I wrote down then you can escape from here.”

“W-We are surrounded by the believers...”

“I will attract the attention of the believers. If the believers follow me in the opposite direction, then the encirclement will be broken. You can escape through the crack.”

“However, Phantom is alive, so how can you be three people... Ah, you will use your skills.”

“That’s correct.”

Phantom was capable of freely changing his face. He would use it and head in the opposite direction of their escape route. In the meantime, the scammers would leave here.

Cho Min-hyuk nodded with understanding. Tae-hyuk pointed to an area outside the building.

“A man will be waiting here for you. If you follow him then the Yakuza absolutely won’t be able to touch you.”

“I understand. Thank you Phantom.”

Phantom disappeared into the darkness.

Cho Min-hyuk, Kim Jin-woo and Park Bum-ho followed the escape path on the map.

“We just need to follow this path.”

The cult leaders started walking towards the destination without knowing what was waiting for them.

## Chapter 130 – Mister Park's Identity #3

---

As they followed the path that Phantom marked on the path, they didn't see many believers. It was the perfect escape route.

Cho Min-hyuk once again marvelled at Phantom's abilities.

“But what will happen to Song Chi-hyun sunbae?”

“Wasn't he caught by the believers?”

“If we don't have his magic tricks, then in the future... What will we do?”

They weren't worried about Song Chi-hyun's safety. They were just colleagues, so it was none of their business if he was caught. They would easily betray each other in order to live. This was an appropriate relationship for partners in crime.

“Forget about that magician. Anyways, it is enough if we just show a few tricks once in awhile. Plus, we have Phantom's skills. Try to imagine it. Phantom appearing before the public.”

“Whoa! There will obviously be a tremendous response.”

“It will be the greatest hit ever, beyond a jackpot. Ohuhu... This time we won't receive Oyabun's help, so let's try hard from the beginning.”

“Yep.”

Cho Min-hyuk recalled Phantom’s absurd abilities. His know-how and Park Bum-ho’s story. What if it was accompanied by Kim Jin-woo’s production? It was obvious that the public would go crazy. Just imagining it caused a smile to appear on his face.

“Once that happens, thousands of people won’t be a problem. Perhaps tens... No, it will be hundreds of thousands of people.”

Cho Min-hyuk felt a twitch in his chest. He felt tremendous expectations towards the future.

Park Bum-ho looked closely at the escape route on the map and said.

“We just need to turn right there.”

If they crossed the wall in front of them, then a car would be waiting on the other side. Once they rode it, they could get out of this place. Their short escape was reaching the end.

Cho Min-hyuk looked at the home of ‘Sun’, where he had stayed for a while.

“Aigoo... I didn’t know it would end up this way. Anyway, right now I am running away. Just wait. Within a year, I will create a

group large enough to swallow Sun.”

Kim Jin-woo listened to his words and agreed.

“I hope so.”

“We are going to be legends. Hahaha!”

He stepped on the Park Bum-ho’s hand and climbed the wall first. Next, it was Kim Jin-woo’s turn. Then the two people pulled Park Bum-ho up on the wall. In a flash, the three people had crossed the wall. It was a proficient move that thieves were capable of.

“I think that is the car that Phantom mentioned.”

Park Bum-ho pointed to a medium sized sedan that was parked. It was so waxed that the car could be used as a mirror.

A big man in a black suit opened the door of the car. He had short cropped hair and black sunglasses. Anyone looking at him would think he was a gangster.

“Are you sure he is the driver?”

“It seems so.”

As they approached, the driver asked,

“Are you Cho Min-hyuk?”

“Yes, that’s right.”

“But I heard there would be three people with you.”

Cho Min-hyuk shook his head and explained,

“One person unfortunately...”

“Well, three is good enough. Then get in the car.”

They quietly nodded and boarded the car. The driver climbed into his seat and said,

“Can you please put on your seat belts?”

“Ah, um. Right.”

After confirming that their seat belts were on, the driver added,

“Whoops, I forgot the most important thing. Would you like to have this?”

He pulled out something shiny and threw it into the backseat.

“Huh? What...”

“Aaaaack!”

“H-Handcuffs!”

Cho Kang-suk, who had been treated as a gangster, turned back to them and declared,

“I am arresting you for murder, imprisonment, assault and drug trafficking! You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law. You have the right to an attorney and to have the attorney speak for you when asked a question. If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be provided for you. Do you understand the rights I have just read to you?”

“.....”

“If you don’t put it on then I will help you directly. What do you want to do?”

“W-We are innocent...”

“Hah, I really got lucky. The prosecutor’s office was paying attention to the movements of the Sun group. Then evidence was found. Sun’s code of conduct doesn’t allow for deserters does it? If



someone tries to desert, then aren't they killed? Ah, don't worry. I have the evidence right here."

"....."

"Oh, the person who gave it to me asked me to tell you this. Make sure to put you in a religion free prison. I did as he asked, so the place where you will be staying is decided. Do you know the Black Tortoise Prison? You can work hard at your religious activities there. Then who knows? Maybe you can go to heaven."

"Kwaaaack!"

Cho Min-hyuk struggled to get out of the car. However, the seat belts couldn't be removed no matter what they did.

"Ah, I placed glue on the joints so it can't be taken off unless a special solvent is used. Then I will drive you to your destination comfortably."

"P-Phantom... That bastard tricked me!"

Cho Min-hyuk cursed his unseen opponent.

However, Phantom hadn't spoken any lies. Being locked up in prison was the easier way to escape from the Yakuza's hands.

---

Cho Min-hyuk and his bishops were arrested by Cho Kang-suk. He made his way down the road like it was an eight lane highway.

However, the remaining people were a problem. They found out about the leader's deceit and discovered that Sun was a cult. Still, the atmosphere didn't quite dissolve.

A person who was exceptionally faithful and who was the representative of the believers climbed on stage. He grabbed the microphone and told the believers,

“All of you are free to return home. But although the leaders were fake, I believe that the teachings of Hwanin are real. Hwanin is an existence that clearly exists. He might've been used as part as a scam, but once he knows that we are waiting, I believe that Hwanin will come down from the sky to save us.”

“Aye! I'll wait!”

“Me too! I was born again because of Hwanin! Even though the impostor blurred his name, Hwanin really exists in the world!”

More than half the believers responded to the representative's words. However, it wasn't everyone.

“Che! Another one... What Hwanin...? I'm going home. Jang-ssi as well?”

“You can go home but I will stay here.”

The representative holding the microphone raised his voice,

“All those who want to leave are welcome to. We won’t oppress any deserters. Just remember Hwanin’s teachings. Wait for him as well. It is free to enter and leave.”

Thus, the believers divided into two groups. Tae-hyuk licked his lips at the sight.

“This is why I only got 300 affinity points. In the end, I can’t save the people who have already fallen into the mud.”

Only 30% returned to their homes. The remaining members renamed themselves ‘Dawn’. A new cult was born.

Tae-hyuk sighed and mixed among the people who were leaving. Then a familiar face was seen. Once Tae-hyuk approached, Lee Gun-woo clearly knew him.

“Ah, this cool face... P-Phan...”

Tae-hyuk raised a finger to his lips. Then Lee Gun-woo nodded.

“T-Thank you for saving me! Greet him as well. This is...”

Lee Min-young was pulled over by Lee Gun-woo and reluctantly bowed.

“Thank you for helping me regain my mind. I really appreciate it, Phantom.”

It was decided that they would leave Dawn and return home. Tae-hyuk touched the Phantom mask hidden on his body and said,

“Well, I was able to fool them thanks to you. So how long do you have left? I hope you finish your remaining military life well.”

Lee Gun-woo’s eyes widened at Phantom’s words. Tae-hyuk had harsh memories of the military. But he wasn’t like Lee Gun-woo, whose life was twisted due to it.

‘Wait. Won’t I get a draft notice next year? I have to experience the army twice... Ah...’

As Tae-hyuk was thinking about the unpleasant memories, Lee Min-young said to him,

“This isn’t the best place, but can I please get your signature?”

“Well. It isn’t that hard. Do you have a paper or pen?”

“Oppa, do you have a pen?”

“No...”

“Ah... The rare opportunity to get the Phantom’s autograph...”

Lee Min-young shook her head with a grim expression. Tae-hyuk said with a smile,

“By the way, do you want to see a magic trick?”

---

The next evening.

Tae-hyuk had set up a trap to catch Mister Park and wanted to make sure that all of the preparations were correct.

“Hrmm, the cameras and mikes are perfect. The boss is resting well in the warehouse... Now Mister Park just needs to come.”

He was disguised as Cho Min-hyuk. Tae-hyuk contacted him urgently stating there was a problem. All the goods and personnel needed to operate Sun were supplied by Cho Min-hyuk.

It wasn’t strange to meet this way. First of all, he needed to find out Mister Park’s identity. Then he would take measures against the Yakuza.

“It is time.”

The appointment time was 6 o'clock. Exactly one minute remained. Tae-hyuk finally looked at his face in the Demon Revealing Mirror. It was the same face as Cho Min-hyuk, so even his biological parents wouldn't recognize him.

“Uh, I'm strangely tense...”

At best, he was just meeting with one of the Yakuza's subordinates. But he felt something strange.

“It is the same as what I felt when I found Yoo Cheol-ho and realized that my memories of the future were real.”

Tae-hyuk swallowed his saliva. It was obvious that Mister Park would have a bigger influence on him than Yoo Cheol-ho.

Ching.

The door opened and a man in his 40s entered the cafe. The cafe had a CLOSED sign so it obviously wasn't a passing customer. This meant...

“Exactly 6 o'clock. I'm not late. You wanted to meet me?”

Tae-hyuk looked at him blankly. It was the first time he was so surprised since gaining the future memories. An unexpected person was standing in front of him.

‘Zombie? No, ghost? Or twins?’

The name of the other person unknowingly fell in a whisper from Tae-hyuk’s mouth.

“Park Jung-hwan...”

In his ‘past life’, Tae-hyuk was framed for killing him and received the death penalty.

Big Mama said that he died two years ago. However, that Park Jung-hwan was now grinning in front of Tae-hyuk.

# Chapter 131 – Traces Of The Mask #1

---

Park Jung-hwan looked quite different from Tae-hyuk's memories.

As a politician of the opposition, he had the image of an upright person, no matter the angle that the photo was taken. He had neatly cropped hair 365 days a year and he always dressed conservatively.

‘However, now it is a hoodie and cargo pants.’

He always wore branded products from department stores. But now, Park Jung-hwan, who insisted on luxury suits worth millions of won, wore such casual clothes...

It felt like seeing the real life of a celebrity.

‘Well, he isn't a politician right now. This might be more natural.

He had hair that wasn't combed properly and the butt of a cigarette in his mouth. If he didn't have the same face then Tae-hyuk really would've thought that he was someone else. Mister Park put the cigarette butt in the ashtray and asked.

“Did you need more Psychotropic Incense?”



Psychotropic Incense. It was the official name of the fragrance that deprived people of their reasoning. Tae-hyuk spoke with a red face, like he was embarrassed.

“These days, too many new followers are entering. I’m sorry but I used almost everything. Heheh, this time a bit more...”

He was like a subcontractor dealing with a large company’s sales department. It was true despite Cho Min-hyuk being the ruler of a cult with more than 1,000 followers. Mister Park sat down in front of Tae-hyuk and declared.

“Let’s finish this full play. Phantom.”

“Huh? What do you mean...?”

“This isn’t an interrogation. Surely you didn’t think that I wouldn’t notice?”

The grovelling expression disappeared from Cho Min-hyuk’s face. It instantly filled with derision. Tae-hyuk, who was disguised as Cho Min-hyuk, pulled out the opera mask.

“Of course, Mister Park.”

“I wanted to meet you, but I didn’t think you would want to meet me first.

The Yakuza were embedded deep in South Korean society. Their eyes and ears were everywhere. It was impossible for them not to be aware that he smashed Sun. However, it wasn't about the cult.

Tae-hyuk's purpose was to meet with Mister Park. He just used Cho Min-hyuk as the bait. Mister Park came here to meet Phantom, not Cho Min-hyuk.

Tae-hyuk confirmed that there was no one outside the window and said.

"I guess you came by yourself."

"The price of South Korean oil is a little bit expensive. I always use public transportation. Anyway, are you planning to kill me?"

"You must be very nervous about it. You are wearing a bulletproof vest under that hoodie."

"Hah. Did you notice? I am a little timid. Well, it is nice to meet you. I am Mister Park."

Tae-hyuk shook Mister Park's hands.

Tae-hyuk activated a crime skill while holding his hand.

'Spying!'

[The Hawk Eyes attribute has been triggered.]

It was one of that attributes of Spying that he spent 10 affinity points to gain after upgrading to a Noble. He had the ability to view the detailed 'status' of the other person after touching hands. He could see the name, abilities and current psychological state.

Mister Park's name appeared in front of Tae-hyuk's eyes.

'...What? Park Jung-hoon? He isn't Park Jung-hwan?!'

His profession was acting as the spokesman of the Oyabun. His intelligence was 50 points and his leadership was 63 points.

'Doesn't Hawk Eyes kick in when holding hands... Hurry up and let me see his psychological state.'

He ignored the things that weren't important.

[Oyabun commanded that Phantom should be brought to our side...]

Tae-hyuk arranged his confused head and spoke calmly,

"Would you like a cup of coffee? The boss seems to be a little busy, so I will make it."

“Huhu, thank you.”

Tae-hyuk drank the coffee while thinking about Mister Park’s real name.

‘Park Jung-hoon rather than Park Jung-hwan. And the same face. They must be twins.’

Park Jung-hwan, who died two years ago, eventually returned to politics. Then he was killed again after that. Park Jung-hoon, his twin brother, was the politician.

‘The opponent is the Yakuza. In other words, the Yakuza will enter the political world.’

He found the last piece of the puzzle.

‘Something went wrong and Park Jung-hwan was murdered. There is a high possibility that the person was associated with the Yakuza. Then they put the guilt on a guard who was near the murder scene.’

It was Seo Tae-hyuk who obtained a job as a guard after the army.

‘This is the method... The true culprit is among the mafia.’

It seemed that winning the mafia game was a condition to update to King. Tae-hyuk narrowed his eyes and looked at Park Jung-hoon.

‘First, they want Phantom. Isn’t it okay to check it out?’

“I don’t know the type of beans so I mixed them roughly. If it doesn’t suit your taste then tell me.”

“Haha. The taste of the coffee made by Phantom... Thank you.”

Park Jung-hoon drank the coffee that looked more like Chinese medicine. Then he looked at Tae-hyuk with sharp eyes.

“I would like to speak plainly, Phantom. I would like you to join the organization.”

“Do you mean to become subordinate to someone else?”

“Haha. You can think of it as a scouting proposal. We are prepared to offer one million dollars as a down payment if you want.”

“That seems a little small.”

Park Jung-hoon’s tension increased at Tae-hyuk’s words.

“Naturally that isn’t all. The organization already has a lot of Korean branches. You can become the chief of those places.”

“Doesn’t it sound like you want to use me as the face?”

“Think of it as a symbol of hope.”

Tae-hyuk contemplated it for a moment before muttering,

“What will happen if I become the chief? What is my share of the profits?”

“I’m sorry, but the organization has heard of your abilities. Firstly, you will need to go to Oyabun and demonstrate them to him. Then you’ll get around 10% of the profits earned.”

10% of the profits obtained from South Korea. It was a lot of money for one person, meaning that they valued Phantom quite highly.

“It is a decent deal.”

“Haha. Of course, you are free to think about it slowly. There is still some time left before the Yakuza will start earnestly working in South Korea.”

Park Jung-hoon pulled out a business card from his wallet. It was a piece of white paper with nothing written. It was actually a

memory card that looked like a business card.

“Once you connect it to a laptop, the program will automatically install. Think of it as a complex way to contact us.”

“Hrmm.”

“So please get in touch. Ah right.”

Park Jung-hoon approached Tae-hyuk and whispered.

“Even if you refuse the proposal, I suggest that you refrain from touching the Yakuza. No matter how outstanding your abilities, you are just an egg. Then I am busy so I’ll go first.”

Park Jung-hoon sent Phantom a menacing smile and left the cafe.

Tae-hyuk drank the cold coffee. It tasted as terrible as its color.

Then he quietly muttered,

“I’m going to pull down that mask.”

---

Tae-hyuk couldn’t walk around in the opera mask, so he changed his face into a familiar criminal. Then he released the boss of the

cafe that was tied up in the warehouse.

“Don’t worry. There were no customers. Ah right, I placed the money for the coffee I drank in the register.”

“Kuooooook...”

He wanted to say something but the other person was Phantom. Tae-hyuk smiled and walked out of the cafe. He used the excuse that he was going to a language course so he still had some time left.

It was a remote place so he had to walk five minutes to get to the bus stop. He was walking down the dark road when there was a sharp scream.

“Kya, aaaack! S-S-Save me! Anyone!”

Tae-hyuk usually would’ve ignored it, but then he realized an interesting fact.

‘If they want to attack someone in such a remote place, wouldn’t they come by car or motorbike? There are no people around, so shall I test my Vehicle Theft skill?’

The crime was happening in a nearby place. After a while, Tae-hyuk would act and steal the vehicle.



‘Stealing from people committing a crime. They won’t bother to report it to the police.’

Tae-hyuk grinned wickedly as he walked towards the place where the screams were heard. Then he saw an unidentified attacker trying to hit a woman. There was a big weapon in his hand, like he wasn’t just trying to steal money.

As expected, there was a car nearby. The woman begged.

“P-Please help me... If I don’t pay these people then they will shoot me with a gun...”

Tae-hyuk sighed and scratched his head,

“Huu... Are you a foreigner?”

The woman looked at Tae-hyuk with big eyes.

She seemed to be asking why he didn’t save her immediately. She had long silver hair that went to the waist and blue eyes. Her beauty was too much to be walking these streets alone.

The girl nodded with tearful eyes.

“Yes, I am from Russia.”

“I’m sorry. Shouldn’t you make this play more plausible?”

“W-What...?”

Tae-hyuk sighed and looked at the gunman trying to attack the woman, as well as the car he came in. The gunman were holding the famous Soviet submachine gun, the PPSH-41. They weren’t the newest weapons, but were a favourite among the mafia.

And...

“Who would attack someone while riding a Mercedes?”

“.....”

It was also the S class that went for more than 200 million won.

“Besides, don’t you know that submachine guns aren’t common in South Korea?”

“.....”

All expression disappeared from the woman’s face at Tae-hyuk’s words. Then she abruptly grabbed the gunman standing beside her.

“I told you that you should use knives, Semon.”

“But, Young Lady. At least this much is needed...”

“Have you forgotten? Our opponent is someone who fought against Big Brother. Don’t you think he can deal with these toys? Still, he didn’t do anything because he realized it.”

“Yes, I understand.”

The woman from Russia grabbed her skirt with one hand and elegantly bowed.

“Zdrastvooyte (Hello in Russian). I am Caterina Ivankov. I came to meet you.”

Tae-hyuk asked,

“Me? Why?”

“I know you are Phantom. We found out that you would be here at this time...”

“Young Lady. Stop it.”

“At any rate, the reason I came is simple. I want to have Phantom as well.”

A proposal? No matter how he looked at it, the atmosphere wasn't romantic enough for such a thing.

Either way, it was clear that she wasn't an ordinary foreign woman. Perhaps...

“Young lady, no, Boss. Saying such words can be misleading. I will explain on her behalf. The person standing in front of you is the handpicked successor of the Ivankov family, and one of Red Mafia's bosses. Kataros (Caterina) Ivankov and Ivankov desperately needs your help. Won't you help us?”

This young lady was a boss of Red Mafia? And they needed his help?

Tae-hyuk narrowed his eyes and looked at the other person.

The Yakuza and the Red Mafia. Both of them started to reach out to grab Phantom's mask.

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[TL Note: Due to the gender neutral nature of the Korean language, it was hard to tell if Kataros was male or female. However, the author also seemed to deliberately conceal her gender, implying that she was male until now.]

## Chapter 132 – Traces Of The Mask #2

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Tae-hyuk brought Caterina and Semon to the previous cafe. In other words, they were entering enemy territory.

Caterina's eyes narrowed as she saw the 'cafe893' sign. (TL: The name is deliberately written in lower capitals by author)

Semon looked around suspiciously, like he expected an ambush. Both of them were suspicious.

“The Yakuza are behind this shop.”

Tae-hyuk smiled as he watched the uneasy Caterina.

“Why, do you think I would sell you out? Well, doesn't this seem surprisingly good? Won't they give me one of the executive positions if I hand over the head of the Red Mafia?”

“Y-You know...!”

Caterina stretched out a hand to stop the agitated Semon from pulling out a gun.

“...Semon. If Phantom was really planning that, then he wouldn't have spoken it out loud. Rather, that type of suggestion makes the story easier. I can promise you three times what the Yakuza offered.”

Tae-hyuk coughed and looked at Caterina.

“Really? Then I will listen to your story.”

Caterina laughed and raised a finger.

“Please look at my face now...hmm. Do you think I am just a pretty face? Actually, Semon is the real boss behind me. So please don’t talk that way.”

Caterina’s words were surprising. Tae-hyuk had been suspicious when Caterina had introduced herself as the boss of the Red Mafia. At this moment, he realized that he took her lightly.

‘She definitely isn’t a normal girl.’

This was the first time he lost a psychological battle against someone.

“Don’t worry about being wiretapped. I removed all the surveillance cameras and recorders that were installed inside.”

“Then let’s talk more over a cup of coffee.”

As they opened the door, the cafe boss was mumbling something while he was counting money. It looked like he was thinking of escaping from debtors.

“Fuck~ I lost revenue due to that Phantom bastard closing my store.”

“Hey, it has been a while. I thought this place would be full of customers, but it’s already closed?”

“C-Cough! Y-You...”

Tae-hyuk laughed and summon an iron pipe using his Violence skill. Then he swung it at the boss’ head.

Kaaang!

The cafe boss fell to the ground with a large sound. Tae-hyuk put the iron pipe down and clapped.

“Now that the witness is handled, we can talk as much as we want.”

“Where did you suddenly get the iron pipe from? Are you a magician?”

“Oh, this? Trade secrets. Then sit back and wait. Do you want any coffee?”

“Ah, yes.”

Tae-hyuk muttered as he made coffee for three people.

“Aigoo... If I knew this was the case, then I would’ve let him make the coffee before hitting him.”

As they drank the coffee that Phantom made, the three people started to talk in earnest. Caterina stirred the surface that looked like a brownie with a fork and said,

“First of all, I should explain my situation. As you can see, I’m a woman.”

“Well, you don’t have to explain that part.”

“A woman can’t become the boss of the mafia.”

“Didn’t you say you were the boss earlier?”

“That is the problem.”

Caterina was the only child of the Ivankov family’s boss. He knew that if he died, there would be a battle over who would be the boss.

“Before my father died, he declared to all the members that he would leave everything to his only child. My father was literally the symbol of Zvezda. If I was a man, then I would’ve been able to



take over the Red Mafia without any problem. Even if they didn't swear absolute loyalty to me like they did to my father, they wouldn't be able to rebel."

Tae-hyuk nodded with an understanding expression.

"Caterina's situation is similar to the King of Russia."

"The Red Mafia, Zvezda is a coalition of various organizations across Russia. Of course, there are eight bosses. I can't stop them all by myself."

"In the end, you will die in the fight against them."

The end of the Red Mafia that Tae-hyuk remembered wasn't so different.

"Of the nine heads, there is only one who follows me. In such a situation, I can only do one thing."

Tae-hyuk looked into Caterina's eyes as she told the story. She was speaking a shameful story. They were words that couldn't be said in front of her subordinates. Was the situation so desperate that she was telling him this?

"In other words, you have to prove that you have the ability to be the Red Mafia's boss."

“Yes.”

Tae-hyuk suddenly had an epiphany.

The Red Mafia had done something in South Korea.

“Um, by the way. Was it the Reubens business?”

The Red Mafia had distributed forged artwork through South Korea. However, he had completely ruined their plans. Surely it was the work of the woman in front of him.

“.....”

Caterina gazed at his opera mask with a red face.

“Huhu, I didn’t do that due to some malice. It was just a few fakes...”

“Then the damage sustained...”

Caterina was unable to bear it and raised her hand to her head.

“...Ugh. I didn’t come to talk about that business, so let’s stop talking about it. After analyzing the past events, I realized that you aren’t someone who would help a female in difficulty. You only move due to what interests you.”

“I am like that?”

“Doesn’t that mean if the conditions are right, we can cooperate with each other? I have some bad memories but I’ll forget about it.”

In fact, Tae-hyuk had inflicted one-sided damage.

‘Hrmm... The Red Mafia’s boss is rendered helpless.’

She came to see him directly so it wasn’t a simple lie.

“So you want my help for Caterina to be recognized as the Red Mafia’s boss?”

“Please, call me Anne. I don’t like that name.”

“If you like.”

“There are many who covet your abilities. Japan’s Yakuza, The Triads in China, and the violent organizations in South Korea as well. The name of Phantom is more widespread among the mafia than you think.”

“So what do you want me to do? Don’t tell me that you are planning to sacrifice the other bosses? I think it would be quicker to ask the guy standing over there. The merchant of death,

Semon.”

“C-Cough.”

Semon coughed as his name was called. But he didn't come forward.

“It isn't that simple. Even if I cut off the hydra's heads, new ones will just grow in their place. However, there isn't enough budget to do a new business. The only thing left for me is South Korea.”

“South Korea?”

“That is where I need your help, Phantom. You are in a conflict with the Yakuza. Right?”

“Um.”

“The Triads as well. Don't you think they are too big to fight alone?”

It made a lot of sense. He didn't want to touch the Triad unless they acted first. However, the Yakuza were different. He needed to fight them in order to obtain Yamashita's gold and smash Mister Park.

Anne accepted it as a positive answer when Tae-hyuk didn't reply.

“Semon and I will be your allies. You don’t need to do anything for us. Just continue fighting with the Yakuza and the Triads. Then I will be able to build nests in South Korea without them interfering.”

Then Anne, after gaining South Korea, would be recognized as the boss of the Red Mafia. Phantom would be used as a barrier to block the Yakuza and Triads.

“In other words, do you mean a non-aggression treaty? That seems to only be lucrative to you.”

“If necessary, I will support you with firearms and troops. And once the whole thing is over, I’ll make you the 10th head of hydra if you want.”

In other words, he would be the boss of the South Korean branches. Obviously, if he entered into an alliance, then he would gain the power to fight both the Yakuza and Triads. However, he needed to keep in mind that the condition for upgrading to a King was to conquer the mafia game. Could he become a King if he allied with the Red Mafia to deal with the other two?

As Tae-hyuk hesitated, Anne opened her mouth.

“If that isn’t enough, there is one thing left that I can give you. With me...”

Unfortunately, Anne didn't finish her words. The Demon Revealing Mirror within Tae-hyuk's clothes started vibrating violently.

Biiiiik-!

A warning cry rang in his ears.

[Caution!]

-The Spying skill has detected a danger.

-The special ability has been triggered and 20 affinity points have been reduced.

-Time remaining until the raid on cafe893.

-00:01:49'

Tae-hyuk trembled as he saw the message in front of him. It was the special feature of Spying that detected the collapse of Atlantis.

This meant...

“W-What is it? A-All of a sudden, a large sound...”

Semon shrugged like he didn't know what Anne was talking about.

“Young Lady. I'm sorry, but I heard no sound.”

“You didn't hear that sound just now?”

There was no time to watch the argument. Meanwhile, the countdown to the attack was steadily decreasing. Fortunately, it wasn't at the level of the bomb exploding in Atlantis.

Tae-hyuk reached towards Semon.

“Gun.”

“W-What do you mean?”

“I have no time to explain now. We are about to be attacked.”

“Nobody knows we are here... D-Don't tell me the Yakuza...!”

Tae-hyuk raised a finger to his lips. Then he used Spying to see how many people were approaching.

“There are around 30 armed gunmen with assault rifles.”

“It is fortunate that I have a weapon, but fighting alone against 30 people...”

If Semon fought against 30 people, then his body would be riddled with holes like a honeycomb. Anne approached the window and looked out using her hand mirror. Then she murmured in a despairing voice.

“W-We are completely surrounded...”

Her eyes gazed at one of the attackers. He wasn't wearing a mask so she could see his face. They were the Yakuza.

“...The Red Mafia. Maybe one of them didn't want me to be recognized as boss.”

Semon moaned.

“Kuoong...”

“I wonder how they knew we were here. Certainly not just anyone...”

The whole reason she came alone without bodyguards was for security reasons. But how did this place...?

While Anne was confused, the man in the opera mask approached.



He smiled and said,

“I’m sorry. Can I ask you something?”

“Huh?”

Are any of your people out there?”

“N-No!”

“Then it doesn’t matter if I get rid of them all?”

“.....!”

It was the first time Anne realized the imposing nature of the man in front of her. He was able to stand against the mafia alone.

# Chapter 133 – Traces Of The Mask #3

---

This was obviously a mistake.

In order to move as stealthily as possible, she only came to South Korea with her right hand man, Semon. She was completely caught off guard since no one else knew about it.

‘They didn’t see Semon and I, so they started searching directly. And they found us.’

Visiting South Korea without anyone knowing actually made it easier for her enemies. If she died here, it would be the end. She had worked her entire life to become the boss of the Red Mafia. But at the end of the day, she would put her life in the hands of someone else. It was a person who she didn’t even know what he looked like.

Anne bit her lip as Semon handed over his weapon.

Semon asked with a determined face,

“I’m sorry but my top priority is protecting the Young Lady. Is it really okay?”

“It looks like you are prepared to die, but I’m sorry. I don’t have immunity to such embarrassing dialogue. You can say those words after I finish this. However, I’ve only held a gun a few times. Shouldn’t you loosen the safety pin of that grenade just in case?”

“T-This isn’t a game!”

“P-Phantom...”

“It is a joke. If it is a gun, then don’t worry too much.”

Anne smiled despite the dangerous situation. He really didn’t look like a reliable man, but she couldn’t help feeling strange.

Anne muttered in a small voice that couldn’t be heard by Semon and Phantom.

“Go, Phantom. Prove that you are a man fit to be my companion.”

As if he heard her words, Phantom walked to the window with the submachine gun. Madness was in the eyes hidden behind the white opera mask.

“Now, Bullet Time.”

---

His weapons were a PPSH-41 and a pistol. The drum cartridge was filled with 71 bullets. However, it would fall in 10 seconds in a shooting spree.

‘The ammo is scarce. I need to spread it out among the targets.’

Tae-hyuk hid behind a wall and used Spying. He could see the detailed data of the approaching assailants. Thanks to that, he could see what they were armed with.

‘PPD-34s, Thompsons... It is like someone is filming a mafia movie.’

They were weapons used by the Soviet army during World War Two. Now they were a favourite among the Red Mafia.

Hawk Eyes meant that he could read the opponents’ fragmented mindset.

[Phantom is inside. I should move with the utmost care!]

[It is a group of three...]

[First of all, we should move in three parts...]

He could know all the tactics that they were planning. It was like a real time strategy simulation game.

‘Now it is time to test out Shooting Spree.’

He used the crime skill on the PPSH – 41, famously know as the

Papasha.

[You have used Shooting Spree.]

-You can handle all firearms.

-The hit rate correction is applied.

-Sixth Sense is activated.

‘Sixth Sense? I can use it with a gun, as well as the iron pipe?’

Sixth Sense was a named attribute for the Violence skill. He could detect when others were attacking. Yet Sixth Sense could be activated with Shooting Spree?

In front of Tae-hyuk’s eyes, red lines appeared as though there was a laser pointer. There wasn’t just one, but dozens of them.

‘Is this the bullet trajectory lines?’

The enemies were pointing a gun at him from the other side of these lines. Tae-hyuk licked his lips and stuck out his tongue.

‘Bullet Time slows down time. These are the bullet lines? If I use

the two attributes at the same time... Aren't I completely invincible?'

Even if he saw the bullet lines, his body wouldn't respond, and it would be impossible to avoid the bullets. However, what if he used Bullet Time as well? Moreover, Tae-hyuk's agility was now more than 60 points. It was possible for him to move beyond the limits of a human.

Once everything was combined-

-00:00:00'

“Вылазка (Rush)!”

Someone cried out and the group burst through the cafe door. At that moment, Tae-hyuk used Bullet Time.

Chiing!

There was a ringing in his ears and the world turned grey.

“In—he—re.”

Semon's scream, as he dragged Anne behind the counter, slowly reached Tae-hyuk's ears.

Tae-hyuk moved his hand first. It moved like he was within a turbulent torrent.

‘Is it because time is slowed? My mind is literally accelerating.’

Ta—————ng!

Bullets were fired by the enemies along the bullet lines. They were coming so slowly that he felt like he could catch them with his hands.

‘Of course, I won’t do such a stunt until I am more accustomed to the accelerated state. First, just concentration on avoiding the enemy’s bullet lines.’

He wasn’t even wearing proper body armour. He hadn’t triggered Damage to Both Sides, so he should avoid being hit by the guns.

‘First one!’

Tae-hyuk fired his gun towards the mafia. Then he aimed for his next target.

Dududu!

Nine bullets penetrated four bodies. Every shot hit the target.

Tae-hyuk hid himself behind a table.

“Hu... Bullet Time off!”

Once the ability was activated, time became dozens of times slower. Moving in an accelerated state consumed a lot of power.

‘First of all, I have to deal with the enemies with bullet lines.’

Anne shouted excitedly from where she was hiding.

“Хорошо..... F-Four people in an instant...”

Unfortunately, he couldn't afford to answer her cheers. Numerous messages were appearing and then disappearing on the Demon Revealing Mirror. Tae-hyuk licked his lips as he confirmed all of it. It seemed like there was a lull in the battlefield that Semon and Anne could use to escape.

“It is better to go out the back door. It seems like they are trying to blow this place up.”

“H-How do you know that?”

“I told you. Trade secrets.”

Tae-hyuk finished speaking and fired the pistol at the mafia



approaching through the back door.

Tang, tang, tang!

Three bullets pierced the opponent's body precisely. He had terrifying shooting skills, like he had eyes in the back of his head.

“Take some cover. I will deal with these people. Then there are three bullets left in this pistol.”

Anne and Semon ran through the gap that Tae-hyuk created. The enemies were divided between the front and the back to narrow down the siege. They thought it would isolate the people inside, but it just ended up dispersing their power.

“It is an honor to be killed by me. Besides, didn't you strike first?”

Tae-hyuk once again used Bullet Time and ran out the front door. Then he heard a buzzing sound, like a mosquito. An RPG-7 was being set up to attack the cafe dozens of metres away.

‘Anti-tank rocket? As expected, they are planning to blow away the whole building. Aren't there other mafia members inside?’

Tae-hyuk aimed his gun at the person putting together the RPG-7.

“\_\_\_\_\_.”

The mafia was confused by the unexpected attack and looked around for Tae-hyuk.

‘This is too slow; I almost feel like yawning. By the way, what will happen if I shoot at that missile primer?’

It was worth a try. Tae-hyuk pulled the trigger as he avoided the bullet line by moving to the side. Flames burst as the RPG-7 exploded.

‘That roughly dealt with five people. Now it is time for the rest.’

The mafia members rushed away as the RPG suddenly exploded. It was easy to suppress them by using the rest of the bullets.

Tae-hyuk released Bullet Time and muttered,

“I recommend studying from Zhuge Liang in Romance of the Three Kingdoms.”

After checking for any additional bullet liens nearby, he quickly headed towards the back of the cafe. The people there never dreamt that their allies at the entrance had been destroyed.

“If we wait here, then the targets will come out. Make sure you don’t miss a shot.”

Tae-hyuk aimed at the leader who was giving instructions.

“Kuaaack!”

“W-Where is the attack coming from?”

“I heard the sound of an explosion. Perhaps the A unit...”

“Damn! What the hell is this...?”

They weren't well-trained soldiers, just people who could fire a gun. After the leader died, the rest turned into rabble.

“S-Save me! He will kill us all!”

Tae-hyuk deliberately didn't attack the people who were running away. They would go home and tell of the fearsome Phantom.

If he saw a number of bullet lines then he would trigger Bullet Time to avoid them. With that alone, the bullets weren't able to hit Tae-hyuk.

“M-Monster...”

Someone cried out as he was shot in the leg.

“Monster? Excuse me. I am Phantom.”

By the time all the people were overpowered, the time limit of Bullet Time had reached zero. Tae-hyuk slowly sighed and muttered,

“Exactly 10 minutes.”

Tae-hyuk wiped out the mafia members at a tremendous speed.

---

Semon, who was hiding behind the building, stuck out his head to check the situation once the gunshots ceased. Then he muttered as he saw the bodies lying all over the place.

“Oh, god...”

Anne covered her mouth with both hands as she saw the horrible scene. It was enough to make a young child scream.

“Oh my god... He did all this alone?”

Anne turned to look at Phantom who was squatting in a corner.

Phantom looked over from where he was picking up the firearms.

“Ah? This? The police will come soon, so I should take anything usable before that. It is hard to get these things in South Korea.”

“Y-You... How did you, no wounds...”

Tae-hyuk fiddled with the opera mask as he approached Anne. Unfortunately, he could only take three guns. Besides, there weren't many bullets left over.

He was feeling a tremendous fatigue from using Bullet Time. Tae-hyuk breathed harshly as he waved his hand.

“Well, shall we finish our earlier conversation?”

“.....!”

Anne realized her own misconceptions.

Phantom wasn't just a hand she could use to keep the other mafia in check.

He was the 'king' who could change the mafia system itself.

## Chapter 134 – Traces Of The Mask #4

---

Anne bit her lip as she recalled what she had just seen. It was an unbelievable sight.

Caterina had once mobilized an elite crew for an assassination. They were those who could fight against the soldiers of other countries.

However, a similar number was now wiped out by only one person. He was also only armed with a submachine gun and a pistol. The mafia members had an anti-tank rocket and sniper rifles that boasted a range of 1000m.

Phantom alone had taken out 30 people. It was a difference that she thought couldn't be overcome. Phantom had fired his gun without even aiming. However, the result was amazing. The RPG-7 exploded, and the sniper with the PSG-1 had his head explode.

“T-This is ridiculous. How can you snipe a sniper with a submachine gun?”

Phantom scratched his head as Anne made a fuss. It was a feat that was possible due to the Shooting Spree skill. He had no answer for how he did it.

“I just did it?”

“.....”

Anne's answer was a low moan. Then her butler appeared behind her. It was Semon who had gone around the battlefield to see if there was any more danger.

"Young Lady. The enemy has been wiped out, even the snipers waiting at a distance."

There were more snipers than the one that Anne saw. Anne looked at the man wearing the opera mask. He didn't have any wounds despite dealing with so many people alone.

Rather, he seemed hungry as he watched his work.

Anne nodded a few times, like she had made up her mind, before speaking.

"Phantom...I followed the traces of the mask. As I said, I was going to use you to deal with the Yakuza and the Triads. Of course, I am going to pay you for your abilities."

"Well, don't you know me very well despite just meeting today?"

Anne laughed at his words.

"I have more spies in the police than just art appraisers. I can't tell you their identities, but I was able to learn about you through them."

“What, there are more spies in the police? Aigoo. There might even be spies among Mister Park’s group.”

“I won’t deny it. At any rate, your abilities are more than what Mister said. I honestly wouldn’t have believed it if I didn’t see it with my own eyes.”

It was because he had just gotten the Shooting Spree skill. Phantom smirked. It was a fact that his crime skills were still growing.

“Once today’s incident reaches the ears of the Yakuza or the Triads, they will try to set you on fire. Originally, I intended to promise you the boss seat of the Korean branch. But any other organization can offer that, so I can only offer one more thing.”

Anne looked at the Phantom with a slightly red face.

The person behind the opera mask was definitely a man. Among the Red Mafia, the Yakuza, and the Triads, she was the only female boss. That’s why only she could offer this.

“I will give you all of the Red Mafia. Could you please marry me?”

“...Wait. Is that a proposal?!”



The other person was the boss of the Ivankov family. He knew what it meant to marry her. It wasn't just the boss of South Korea, but ruling over all of the Red Mafia.

“Fortunately, I am still in my 20s and still haven't been married. In addition, I think I am fairly beautiful.”

“20s...?”

“Yes, I am 29.”

“.....”

Phantom...

No, Tae-hyuk gulped. Although he tried to be as calm as possible, he was several times more nervous than when he was fighting the mafia. He never thought he would receive a proposal from a woman more than 10 years older than him.

‘I thought she was around the same age as Noona, but she is five years older?!’

She was beautiful enough to become a model right now. Furthermore, she would bring along the Red Mafia.

“If your answer is a yes, can you take off the mask?”

At that moment, Tae-hyuk's spirit recovered.

Anne proposed to Phantom, not Seo Tae-hyuk. In order to protect his precious ones, this line couldn't be crossed no matter what.

As Phantom seemed to hesitate, Anne moved closer.

"Perhaps you already have someone in mind? First place is good, but I can be satisfied with being the second."

"Cough. That isn't the problem. And I'm sorry, but can you back away a little bit?"

"Do you not like me?"

It wasn't unpleasant to marry a beauty like Anne. However, problems would arise after accepting.

"...At any rate, I will accept half of Anne's offer. First, I will deal with the Yakuza and the Triads. However, I will be doing it by myself, and will not be working with the Red Mafia. Of course, I'll be happy if you provide weapons."

"Hrmm... then are you rejecting my proposal? My appearance..."

"No, don't you think it is too fast to marry someone after only meeting them for one day?"

Anne clapped in pleasure.

“Then it isn’t a refusal? Shall we date first? It is okay if you don’t want to show my your face. It is like a real phantom so I don’t think it is bad.

Tae-hyuk couldn’t help sighing. It seemed like the number of females around him who gave him headaches had increased.

“First of all, let’s leave this place. The police will soon come swarming.”

“My car... Oh my. The anti-tank rocket destroyed it.”

It was probably to prevent any escape. Tae-hyuk scratched his head and replied,

“I already stole cash from the mafia. Let’s try Vehicle Theft.”

As Tae-hyuk touched it, the truck started up without the car keys.

Anne clapped in amazement. It seemed like she wouldn’t have to worry about catching a taxi on the honeymoon.

---

Shin Se-ho, the chief of ABS Broadcasting, opened his eyes as a familiar voice was heard over the phone.

“...P-Phantom!”

-It has been a while. Have you recovered from your injuries?

“Ha, ha, ha! Yes, of course. Thank you for saving my life. I thought you forgot our promise because you haven’t contacted me in a while.”

Shin Se-ho had a deal with Phantom. If he wanted to broadcast something then he would release it only through Shin Se-ho. Shin Se-ho was an ambitious person and didn’t miss the opportunity that Phantom gave him. In the end, he was promoted from being a PD at ABS. Since then, he acted like he was Phantom’s good friend.

-I’ve been away for a while now, so I think I need a big hit.

Shin Se-ho’s hands shook.

Just Phantom alone would cause the audience ratings to skyrocket.

But a big hit? It was a word that Phantom never said despite several broadcasts.

“T-Thank you. I’m sorry but can you give me a quick hint? I

would like it to be a dramatic story like the organ trafficking...”

A laugh was heard from the phone.

–Did you know that China’s Triads were behind that situation?

“O-Of course. Due to that, fan clubs were created for Phantom. Then this story...”

Destroying the Chinese criminals that the police couldn’t catch. The public was enthusiastic about the appearance of the criminal who judges criminals. But what about it?

–A few days ago, I was bored and smashed a cult.

He knew about that.

“Ah! Are you talking about the Sun group? The scoop was sent to our station. That was Phantom’s work?”

–Yes. By the way, the Japanese Yakuza were involved.

“Ah...is that so?”

Shin Se-ho’s eyes shone. He had his scoop for the evening.

–The Triads and the Yakuza. Do they think that they could act as

they like in South Korea? So I thought I would give them a warning.

“.....!”

In other words, he was talking about war. It was a big hit since he was targeting criminal organizations from other countries that were active in Korea.

H-H-Huge scoop.

–Of course, I’m sure that you will do well, but I want to specifically direct this. And make sure the video is registered on the UCC site so that people around the world can see it. ABS Station can have the advertising fees as long as it is spread as much as possible. How about it?

“O-Of course.”

Phantom had only done four broadcasts, but they had earned billions of won worth of advertising revenue. But the scale this time was completely different. Phantom had declared war. The contents were provocative enough to get the public excited.

It would be tens of billions of won. Even if he only took 10% of this...

Shin Se-ho mind thought of a foreign car that he had been noticed for ages. It was more than 250 million, so he had been

hesitating. Now it wouldn't be hard to buy it with a lump sum.

---

The screen slowly brightened and showed the terrible scene of the 'Doll Play' incident caused by the Chinese Triads. Then the killer Big Brother murdering innocent Koreans with a gun was reenacted by actors. Finally, the terrible images of children becoming addicted to drugs were shown.

A voice narration flowed over it.

"They came to South Korea to commit crimes that they couldn't do in their own country."

The screen changed. It was the Death Circus, where people had to kill someone else to live. Then the fanatics from cults were shown.

"To them, we are just toys that can be played with."

The narrator took a breath that allowed the viewers to focus on the images of the brutal crimes.

At that moment, the screen cracked. No, it looked like it was broken. Something white started to emerge on the black screen. It was the now familiar Phantom mask.

The voice narration stopped and music started playing. Beethoven's Symphony No. 3, Heroic. It was the climax, causing an

excited atmosphere.

Phantom spoke.

“Everybody, I am sad. Before I knew it, this land has been filled with crimes committed by the Yakuza and the Triads. I remember the tragedy of T Medical Centre. They kidnapped the children and took their lives for their organs. That is why I punished them. Remember the case of the Chinese killer? He threatened me by holding innocent civilians hostage, so I judged him. However, the crimes by the mafia are still occurring. That is why I will give an order as Phantom. Leave this country right now. If you ignore the warning and invade my area—.”

Phantom paused for a moment.

The screen turned black. It faded out. Soon, the music changed to Beethoven's piano sonata No.2. And a phrase that would be remembered for a long time was heard.

“— I will punish them!”

The melody quieted while the people watching became excited. The public started to pay attention to the movements of the criminal Phantom who judged other criminals.

---

-Did you see Phantom's video? It has already surpassed three million views on YouTube.



-Soy milk Phantom?

-I've watched it over 100 times, and I had to change my panties three times.

-Isn't it very Korean? We no longer have any imports, so we are now importing criminals.

-Brothers, would you like to use this opportunity to change from a Hahoe mask to a phantom mask? Isn't a true Hallyu star born? ○ ○ ㄸ! Phantom!

-I will smile as the Yakuza and the Triads get what is coming to them.

The video of Phantom was uploaded to video sites and recorded millions of views in a single day.

Of course, among them...

## Chapter 135 – Everybody Gather!

---

Tae-hyuk stared blankly into the air as he went to school for the first time in a while. After entering the third grade, he had gone abroad to study. The Blue Dragon Prison was out at sea, so it wasn't exactly a lie.

Thus, it had been more than a month since he sat in a chair and took classes. It was noisy in the classroom, due to the presence of a dark horse that appeared after a long time.

“Did you see the results of yesterday's mock exam?”

“It is really perfect.”

“There were two people in our school who got perfect scores.”

“Eh? I know one. Who is the other person?”

“Who? Over there.”

“Ah...Seo Tae-hyuk?”

“Class President has already been accepted into S University. She can pick any university like they are ice creams.”

“.....”

Their chatter entered his ears, but Tae-hyuk didn't care. He also received comments on the Internet about Phantom. This was just cute.

Tae-hyuk manipulated the Demon Revealing Mirror to check his stats.

-Stats: Stamina (67), Intelligence (70), Agility (55), Dexterity (64)

Particularly noteworthy was the additional 20 points in intelligence. He had been able to reach 50 points easily with An Eun-young's help. However, he hadn't studied with her after that. But it rose at a tremendous pace while fighting other criminals.

The Red Mafia art forgery case. the Triads' organ trafficking. After the cult incident with the Yakuza, Tae-hyuk's stats increased enormously. In the case of his stamina, it went up by 10 after fighting against dozens of mafia members.

‘I literally took a giant leap.’

Yesterday, mock tests were conducted all across the country. He thought it was a good opportunity to see how his head had improved. The result was a perfect score for all subjects. He also finished the tests with 10 minutes to spare.

‘This is just 70 points. If I get 100 points, then can’t I win a Noble Prize?’

However, it was more interesting to plot crimes than to study. Anyways, his stats seemed to ascend when he specialized in crime.

‘A criminal should have a good head.’

There was still some time before homeroom would start. Tae-hyuk pulled out his phone from his pocket and accessed the Internet. The incident from a few days ago was still heating up the news columns.

[Declaring war on the mafia who encroached on South Korea? Phantom’s purpose.]

It was an obvious gossip story that he knew the contents without even clicking on it. But there was an eye-catching ripple.

–No matter how incredible Phantom is, it will be hard for him to deal with the whole mafia alone. Even if the mafia were chased out, they can just start operating secretly. Will we ever be able to get rid of their weeds? It will remain the same. Even if one sprout is pulled out, two more will grow in its place until the person is exhausted.

The debate continued. It made a lot of sense. It didn’t appear in the news but the mafia were still active in South Korea.

Of course, Phantom's declaration of war wasn't a prank call. He would let the opponent know how much damage he could do.

One person alone couldn't deal with the whole mafia.

'But I am sorry. In this case, I've prepared a plan.'

However, it couldn't be implemented right now. There were a few things that needed to be taken care of before he could smash the mafia.

'First...'

Bam!

At that moment, his eyes flashed.

"Hey! Tae-hyuk! What are you doing? Class has begun."

It was Jung Nam-ho, his teacher, who spoke with his unique dialect. He had hit the back of Tae-hyuk's head. Tae-hyuk rubbed his head and said,

"Uhh...Teacher-nim. Doesn't it seem like your treatment towards me hasn't changed?"

“This brat. I will treat all my students the same, even if you ended up being first in the nation. Aigoo, I didn’t think I would get you for two years in a row.”

Jung Nam-ho was still Tae-hyuk’s third year homeroom teacher. Most of the classmates changed, but he was still together with An Eun-young and Jung Nam-ho. Since starting to work as Phantom, Tae-hyuk had become so busy that he needed two bodies to do everything. Even so, he came to school consistently due to two people.

“Oh, please bring your sister on the Friday written here. I have something to say to her.”

“Huh? N-Noona?”

Tae-hyuk’s eyes shook as Jung Nam-ho requested the presence of his guardian. Surely no one knew that he was the Phantom. Did Jung Nam-ho perhaps see him with the Nuclear Bomb members? It couldn’t be...

“Yes! It is Seo Tae-hyuk’s third year. You have to decide your future path.”

“Ah.”

Tae-hyuk nodded with a convinced look. In a words, the guardian had to come for career counseling.

Jung Nam-ho told him.

“You worked hard on the exams. They are grades that anyone would desire. Effort never betrays you...”

However, Tae-hyuk was thinking about something else.

‘Then it is time to talk with him.’

Tae-hyuk smiled as he visualized someone’s face.

---

“— I will punish them!”

Kwang!

The young boss of the Triads, Li Zheng, struck his desk after seeing the video from the UCC site.

“This bastard!”

“B-Boss...”

The subordinates trembled at the boss’ agitated state. Their boss was someone who always kept his cool, even when subordinates were lost. Yet he was agitated this time.

Li Zheng glared at his subordinates with blazing eyes then tore up the reports on his desk. They were the results of various plans to bring Phantom into the Triads.

All of them failed.

“He hates money, hates honor, and hates women. Even if he dies, he doesn’t want to go under another person...”

He lost count of the sweet fruits that he offered Phantom. However, the target didn’t bite the apple.

Li Zheng was furious.

“...Then we have to kill him before he falls into someone else’s hands.”

Li Zheng calmed down and ordered his subordinates to summon his special forces.

“Kukukuk... Even Phantom wouldn’t be able to take on dozens of armed men. Tell them that anyone who obtains Phantom’s neck will be give a three million dollar reward. Let’s see how much he can do alone. I might be using a flamethrower to catch a rat in a warehouse, but I have to let him know that he can be killed.”

At that moment, the door opened and an agitated man in a black



suit entered.

“What?”

“B-Boss... P-Phantom.”

“Phantom?”

“Yes...do you know the matter from a few days ago? The bosses of the Red Mafia mobilized armed men with powerful firearms to kill the ‘Princess.’”

“Well. I think I recall it. What does it have to do with Phantom?”

The subordinate dropped his head and said,

“...Phantom rescued her from the Red Mafia’s hands.”

“W-What?! Wait a minute. The opponents were armed with weapons! I clearly remember that anti-tank rockets and sniper rifles were mobilized, yet one man saved the princess and got away?”

Li Zheng got goosebumps.

The fact that the Red Mafia was engaged in a civil war was well known. They would obvious fight among themselves and self-

destruct. That's why he hadn't worried about the movements of the Red Mafia.

But what was this? Phantom stopped the assassination of the boss?

"D-Don't tell me... Phantom has gone under the princess of the Red Mafia?"

"I don't know. It is the worst case scenario."

"We have to absolutely stop it! Phantom doesn't need to join the Triads. However, he shouldn't become the Red Mafia's subordinate!"

"I-I will keep that in mind!"

"But... He really is great. Saving the boss from dozens of armed people. Yes, what about the damage to both sides?"

It would be preferable if Phantom got a big injury and died. However, the expression of his subordinate was strange. It was like opening a box that shouldn't be opened.

"Tell me. What the hell happened?"

"T-They were wiped out."

“What?”

“Phantom killed all of his opponents and strolled out of there.”

“.....”

Li Zheng sat down like he saw a ghost. Phantom was a rodent who was an eyesore. However, the problem was that his abilities were real.

Another subordinate listening from the side asked,

“B-Boss. Should I convene the special forces?”

“Shut up!”

---

Tae-hyuk took the paintings he forged to Big Mama’s pawn shop. Big Mama clapped with a big smile.

“Omo! You succeeded in stealing it!”

Two of Gauguin’s oil paintings.

The result of the careful examination was that it was all ‘genuine.’

Tae-hyuk bought information from her by saying that the Sun Cult had some Gauguin paintings. If so, he had to show her the results. In the future, her help would be needed to fight the mafia. Therefore, he had to do this.

Paul Gauguin's paintings were traded for hundreds of millions of won to collectors.

‘Of course, it is a fake.’

Big Mama was an intellectual in the art forgery business. Tae-hyuk was selling fake goods to such a person. Naturally, some work was needed to create these pieces. First of all, his Forgery crime skill was fully activated to create the most plausible fakes. Then he used Counterfeit on top of that.

In such a way, he managed to create fakes that could even deceive Big Mama. Although the duration of Counterfeit had increased due to an attribute, it was still only 30 minutes. However, Big Mama wouldn't look so carefully after purchasing it.

‘Is the saying, the person who was deceived is in the wrong?’

Tae-hyuk was reminded of Big Mama's motto. A person who didn't know it was a fake as they were buying it was the one at fault. This was literally a complete crime.

“I think I can give you 100 million.”

The two paintings of Gauguin were traded for hundreds of millions of won. But 100 million.

Tae-hyuk moved the abacus. Usually, stolen goods were traded at 20~30% of the market price. A lot was taken away as a commission fee. This was a very conscientious price.

Above all, Big Mama only paid in cash. Therefore, she gave him an excellent price. For her, Tae-hyuk was a trading partner that she didn't want to give up.

Tae-hyuk replied with a smile,

“I'll accept 70 million. Instead, please give me some information for the remaining amount of money.”

“Hoh. You have grown a lot when it comes to business.”

“Of course. I am a child growing every day.”

Once Tae-hyuk asked about the Yakuza who were active in South Korea, Big Mama gazed at him with suspicious eyes.

“Have you been making a bad friend these days? In particular, someone who has a hobby of wearing a strange mask?”

“Ah, do you think that I know Phantom? I am just filled with

burning patriotism these days. I heard that the Yakuza are gathering Goryeo celadon (Korean pottery from the Goryeo era that is pale green-blue in color). I want to try and steal it.”

“Goryeo celadon? Really?”

“You can’t spill this anywhere since I’m putting a lot into this. Of course, I will deal with Big Mama. Is this enough for you?”

“...I will do it. But this time it will take longer. Please wait at least three days.”

“Three days. Right.”

He thought it would take at least one week. But it was just three days. Big Mama was truly the madame of the information world.

Tae-hyuk waved at Big Mama as he left the pawn shop.

A fake piece of artwork that he spent half a day on was sold for a lot of money. He would also get the information he wanted. Big Mama really was generous.

Tae-hyuk muttered as he walked in an alley,

“Since I have nothing to do for three days, shall I break out the Bomber?”

Tae-hyuk started collecting the parts necessary to fight the mafia.

## Chapter 136 – Everybody Gather! #2

---

“Oooooof!”

In a dark container box, someone’s rough groaning was heard. The blue guard’s uniform he was wearing was drenched in sweat.

The person was in his late 20s. The young guard was tied to a pole with his hands behind his back. A cable tie, that police used as a handcuff substitute, was being used to keep him confined. It was a string made of a very thick and durable plastic. In order to take it off, a wire cutter was necessary. His wrists and 10 fingers were bound together, so it was literally impossible to move a single finger.

“Kuoooooh!”

The guard wondered why he was in this situation. He seemed to have been hit by someone in the back of the head. In order to get to work, he had to get to the port by car and then sail for another 30 minutes. He parked his car in his usual space and came out...

“Hueok!”

The guard shrieked as something white appeared in front of him. At first he thought it was a ghost. But when he opened his eyes wide and checked, it was a man wearing a mask. He wore a black outfit in a dark room, so it looked like his head was floating.



“You should carefully look at the sides when getting out of the car.”

“Oof, oooof!”

“Oh, I’m sorry about this. You want to say something, but there is a gag in your mouth.”

The black shadow came up and pulled out the fabric blocking the guard’s mouth. Then he was able to do what he wanted.

“....C-Cough! P-P-Phantom!”

“Am I so famous that you are shouting with a happy face to see me? This is the taste of appearing on TV. Shouldn’t I take this opportunity to get one CF?” (CF=commercial)

Phantom started to talk nonsense. The guard looked at Phantom with an perplexed expression. The guard thought back to eight generations of his family tree. However, none of them were associated with the mafia.

“...Why did you attack me? Didn’t you say that you were aiming for the mafia?”

“That? Did I say I would only catch the mafia?”

“T-Then...”

Phantom laughed.

“Ah, don’t worry too much. I don’t plan to do anything to you. If you help me, then you will be able to go home without being hurt.”

“...If I refuse?”

The exposed mouth gently curved upwards.

“What will happen? I personally recommend that you don’t listen. Do you still want to hear it?”

“.....”

Phantom was holding a knife. The guard shook his head and bit his lip.

“Name, Cho Il-jang. 29 years old. You started working at Red Phoenix three months ago. You haven’t received a ticket yet? Due to recent worries, you haven’t been able to sleep properly.”

“H-How?”

His name and age wasn’t so hard to find out, but the last part gave him goose bumps. He didn’t even tell his parents that he was struggling!

“I don’t have a long time to explain so I’ll just tell you what I want.”

Cho Il-jang, a new guard, gulped.

Perhaps Phantom wanted inside information about Red Phoenix. Then he picked the wrong person. Cho Il-jang hadn’t even received a proper pass yet. He was literally just a rookie. He didn’t know anything about the prison. If Phantom wanted information then he should’ve snatched another guard.

“Well, it is over now. Your cries or moans won’t register properly. Oh, did I say I would give an explanation? This is all you need to do.”

Phantom swung the iron pipe that was hidden behind his body.

Peeok!

“.....!”

Cho Il-jang couldn’t even scream as he fell unconscious.

“Just sleep here for one day. Think of it as a vacation.”

Phantom pulled off the mask to reveal Cho Il-jang’s face. It was the same as the face in front of him. From now on, he would enter

Red Phoenix Prison as the new guard Cho Il-jang. Then he would grab the hand of the Bomber and escape.

Phantom looked at Cho Il-jang who had fallen unconscious.

“I will leave evidence behind so that you can avoid being framed. Well, I’ll also help you out with the boss who has been bothering you.”

The police officers patrolling the area in 24 hours would find the car that was left unattended. He had until then to finish everything.

---

“This brat must be crazy. Why are you so late?”

Cho Il-jang’s supervisor, Kim Byung-gun, wasn’t feeling well this morning.

His junior made him wait 10 minutes.

“I-I’m really sorry. My car broke down so I hurriedly had to take a taxi... But it seems like I am still a little late.”

“Shouldn’t you answer be I’m sorry I’m late?”

“...Ah, no.”

“Eh? You’re not even looking in the face of your sunbae when talking. Shouldn’t this brat show respect for your sunbae?”

“I’m not ignoring you!”

“Then do you dislike looking at my face?”

This was like a Mobius strip; it seemed like it would go on forever.

Tae-hyuk held his tongue and looked as sorry as possible.

“...Then shouldn’t we be getting on the boat? If we don’t hurry, then we will miss the good positions.”

Kim Byung-gun gritted his teeth.

“This bastard...move.”

The newbie stared fearfully at his angry expression. But Kim Byung-gun didn’t see how his mouth slowly curved upwards.

“Then pick a suitable place to sit down.”

“Yep!”

Tae-hyuk naturally sat at the empty entrance side.

“I-I don’t want to sit facing the sea breeze. Aish, this rookie is late, so there are no other seats.”

Red Phoenix Prison was far away from land. Therefore, abuse under the pretext of education was widespread. In particular, the prison warden was a colonel in the army. Every word from his mouth emphasized discipline. In the end, the prison guards of Red Phoenix were so obedient to the ones above them that they were like soldiers.

The ship arrived at the prison, and the guards started to disembark. Kim Byung-gun said with a sneer,

“Shouldn’t you do the heavy lifting for your sunbae? Look at you. Have you only come here once or twice?”

“I’m take it!”

“Yes brat. Move a little bit faster.”

‘This is enough to cause a neurosis. Isn’t it like a military pairing? No, isn’t it worse? At least there is a time limit until I can be discharged from the army.’

The turnover rate here was higher than everywhere else. A guard who had his cap covering his face was at the prison entrance. He was holding a metal detector in his hand. Even the guards had to

be thoroughly searched.

Tae-hyuk and Kim Byung-gun, who were at the exit, were the first to get off the ship. Thus, they were at the front of the line to enter the prison.

“Please stand in one line.”

The method for a physical search was simple. First, all metallic objects would be placed in a basket, and then the body would be checked with the detector.

Biiik!

The detector made a loud sound as it moved around Tae-hyuk's body. The person checking him was perplexed.

“Uh, what is this? Hey, Newbie. What did you miss?”

“I-I'm really sorry.”

“Don't just apologize. Ah, the people waiting behind...”

“Oh, maybe my leather belt...”

“I told you not to wear a metal one! Ah, I feel like I am being tortured due to this brat. Ack! Why are you taking off your pants

here? Just enter. Ah...”

“Yes, yes! Sunbae, good work!”

After Tae-hyuk passed, it was Kim Byung-gun’s turn. His face was completely rotten. As soon as he passed through the checkpoint, he spat at Tae-hyuk.

“Ah, this fucking brat. What a stupid thing to do. How many times have I told you to be careful?”

“...I’m sorry.”

Kim Byung-gun spat on the floor and said,

“Head for the accommodations and wait there. I will show you hell today.”

“.....”

Then he walked towards the smoking area.

Tae-hyuk smiled widely.

‘—As planned.’

Tae-hyuk touched his belly. He could feel something bulging out.



There were two reasons why Tae-hyuk chose Cho Il-jang as the target of Disguise. He was a famous target among the prison guards. Even if Tae-hyuk behaved strangely, the guards would just blame it on him being a brat.

‘It was the right thing to sit at the entrance.’

The entrance of the ship was an area that people avoided because it was very busy. Furthermore, today there would be a sea breeze and water splashing if anyone sat there. It was a place that the prison guards were reluctant to sit.

However, he was able to get off first when arriving at the destination. That’s why he deliberately arrived just as the ship was going to depart. In the end, Tae-hyuk was able to pass the physical examination very quickly.

‘The person in charge of the checkpoint today dislikes Cho Il-jang. It will be impossible for him to ignore the long line and do a slow physical search.’

In the end, he could safely pass through the checkpoint while hiding various things in his body. And another reason why...

“Hey! Cho Il-jang! What are you doing! Quickly change clothes to prepare for your shift!”

One of the guards urged him quickly.

Tae-hyuk looked at the building that the guards were entering. The Bomber was trapped inside.

‘This guy is in charge of the bombs.’

---

He was changing clothes in the dressing room when he heard a rough voice from somewhere.

“This bastard. Why did I say just now? Didn’t I say to head to the accommodations?”

“I-I’m really sorry. I was told it was my shift right now.”

“Who?”

“That...”

Kim Byung-gun’s temper ignited as he heard the name from Tae-hyuk’s mouth.

“Fuck, that bastard must be crazy. Who is the most senior one?”

“...Kim Byung-gun sunbae.”

“Then you should listen to me until the end.”

“I will listen to Kim Byung-gun sunbae.”

“Do you know this? Hey, you brat. Come with me.”

“.....”

Kim Byung-gun grabbed Tae-hyuk's collar and pulled him into a warehouse. The guard at the entrance of the warehouse saw Kim Byung-gun's face and pretended not to know anything. After entering the warehouse, Kim Byung-gun hurled Tae-hyuk to the floor and shouted,

“Today you are dead. Eh? Is this bastard smiling?”

“Kuhuhuhut...”

“Very well...a-aaack! W-What is that?!”

Tae-hyuk took out a scalpel. It was something that he had hidden in his clothes. It was only a blade without a holder, so he had to hold it with the tips of his fingers.

“What? Scalpel No.20. It is good for making large incisions.”

“T-This crazy bastard, crazy! You brought a razor blade? F-

Fuck...it was good that I brought this.”

Kim Byung-gun said angrily as he pulled out a taser. Then he turned on the output to the maximum. It was enough to take down a martial artist.

Despite seeing the taser gun, the bastard still stood with a confident face.

“Today is your memorial service day.”

Tae-hyuk looked at Kim Byung-gun while holding the scalpel. Then he laughed.

Kim Byung-gun got goosebumps.

Since when did that person smile laugh like that? It was a laugh that seemed to suit the criminals locked up here.

“I am looking forward to your replacement.”

## Chapter 137 – Everybody Gather! #3

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“Aaaaack! T-T-Taste this e-electricity!”

“—Bullet Time.”

Kim Byung-gun aimed the taser gun with trembling hands and pulled the trigger. The two electrodes were launched. The electricity was set at the limit to neutralize the opponent. There was a pajjik sound as the electrodes flew through the air.

Tae-hyuk easily avoided the taser gun fired by Kim Byung-gun.

“W-W-What, what the hell?”

The taser gun used a cartridge of compressed nitrogen to fire the electrodes. Although the range was short, the speed definitely wasn't slow. It was impossible to see the shot and then avoid it. But he did so effortlessly.

“...Turn off. I have to save my daily minute. Then shall I start this game?”

Tae-hyuk moved his left hand.

Then he triggered one of the attributes of Illegal Surgery to block pain. It was a skill that amplified the micro electricity flowing through the body. The nerves would be paralyzed for a while so

that he wouldn't feel any pain. It was a very good match with Illegal Surgery.

Then he brought the No.20 scalpel to his belly. He didn't have the holder so he had to press down on the blade with his fingertips. Such sophisticated work would've been impossible without the help of his crime skills.

As he cut under his belly button, the contents inside started to be revealed.

“Ack, aaaaack!”

“Let's see. Was it here?”

Tae-hyuk rummaged through his stomach and started to pull things out. He definitely put a silicon pack inside...

Ah, found it! If he didn't die from whatever he did using Illegal Surgery, then he could restore it through Cancel. Therefore, he acted like his body was a cadaver for dissection. However, touching his insides with his fingers was never pleasant.

Kim Byung-gun's eyes were huge as he watched the scene in front of him. His entire body trembled. It was like a grotesque scene from a horror movie.

Tae-hyuk pulled out the silicon pack that he put in his stomach. It was drenched in blood but the contents were fine.

“I haven’t eaten anything since yesterday due to this. But surprisingly, I’m not that hungry.”

“Kuaaack!” M-Monster!”

Inside was a Glock 17 and a spare mag. Tae-hyuk pulled out the gun and bullets as he muttered.

“You like to play pretend army. Now I am holding a gun. Do you want to play?”

“G-Go away! Arggggghhh!”

Kim Byung-gun completely panicked and fell down as he tried to retreat backwards.

N-N-Noooooo!”

If he kept calm and reloaded the taser gun then it wasn’t impossible to attack. Tae-hyuk combined the pistol with the magazine and loaded the bullets.

Ching.

The sight of a man who cut open his stomach and was approaching with a gun was literally horrifying. It was a weapon that was taken out of his own stomach.

“Come, let’s play once.”

Tears flowed from Kim Byung-gun’s eyes. His whole body trembled as he stared at the weapon. Tae-hyuk slowly moved towards the other person.

“Shall I see what the lunch menu was today?”

“Eeeeeeeok!”

In the end, Kim Byung-gun dropped the taser gun to the ground. Then he started to move. As Kim Byung-gun took one step back, the zombie with the gun took two steps forward. Once Kim Byung-gun was inevitably blocked by a wall, he started to scream as if he was dying.

There were guards passing by outside the warehouse. Surely one of them would come rescue him. But unlike his predictions, the guards outside didn’t come to his rescue. They just thought that Kim Byung-gun’s punishment was a little harsher than usual.

“P-P-Person...!”

Tae-hyuk arrived at Kim Byung-gun’s side and aimed the gun at the other person’s head. If he used even a little bit of strength then it would turn into a pool of blood.



“Bang!”

“Ackkkk...!”

Kim Byung-gun fainted as he thought the sound effect from Tae-hyuk's moth was real gunfire.

“Well. Shall I borrow this face?”

Tae-hyuk hid the gun and canceled Illegal Surgery. Then it was like time reversed as all the blood and substances on the floor returned to his body. Next, the stomach that was visible to the naked eye disappeared. It only took five seconds to repair his belly.

At that moment, Tae-hyuk's vision clouded. It seemed like he had opened his belly too large and had put a large strain on his body.

“...This is the limit.”

Using the pain blocker didn't just mean that he wouldn't feel any pain. It meant that he wouldn't notice if the body's condition was worsening. In the future, he had to be careful when doing such a thing.

Tae-hyuk hid Kim Byung-gun in a corner of the warehouse and turned into him. Kim Byung-gun was quite muscular but there was a superficial similarity when covered by clothes. However, Tae-hyuk had to be careful when taking off his clothes and showering.

Tae-hyuk exited the warehouse and pretended to know the other guard.

“Kim Byung-gun sunbae. Did you properly punish the rookie today? He screamed like he was dying.”

“I need to do this sometimes or else he won’t listen to me well. You should also be careful. The rumors these days aren’t very good.”

“Ugh. U-Understood. By the way, the rookie?”

“He is still blubbering in the warehouse. Don’t pull him out needlessly. Maybe it is better if he is stuck in there for a while.”

“Yes! U-Understood.”

Tae-hyuk had fed him a sleeping pill, so he should be out for at least half a day. He had verified the efficiency using Yoo Cheol-ho.

Of course, he didn’t forget the security card that Kim Byung-gun had. He was now free to roam around the interior of the prison.

“Then shall I gather everyone together?”

---

Yoo Cheol-ho scratched his ears and murmured,

“Who is talking about me? Why do my ears tickle? Fuck, why do I need to wash poop-stained underwear here? If I had escaped Blue Dragon Prison as planned, then I would be sticking a knife in that cocky detective right now.”

When he was in Blue Dragon Prison, he had strangely slept all day. By the time he woke up, the prison was crushed and he was being moved to Red Phoenix. In the end, the tunnel that he dug for nearly six months was useless.

“Do you think I will give up just from that? I’m Yoo Cheol-ho! I will also escape from here!”

Yoo Cheol-ho muttered as he loaded dozens of prisoner uniforms into the washing machine.

A new escape plan was created in his head.

Red Phoenix had one distinctive feature compared to the other three prisons. The medical facility was much worse than the other prisons. In particular, the special ward for mentally ill patients is operated by another prison on land. This was what Yoo Cheol-ho was aiming for.

“I wanted to be the first person to escape from Blue Dragon Prison. If I am in a hurry then can’t I pretend to be crazy?”

At that moment, Yoo Cheol-ho noticed a familiar person who was working alone. It was a middle-aged man wearing thick rimmed glasses.

“Ah, I forgot about him. I was supposed to watch him.”

The reason why Yoo Cheol-ho was in a rotten place like this was simple. He made some type of deal with the warden of Red Phoenix. As he was always preparing to escape from prison, he acted quietly, which caused him to be treated well.

“I don’t know what that person did in society that caused him to be imprisoned. Am I just supposed to watch and report if he does anything unusual? I’m lucky that I can be rewarded for doing such a simple job.”

Yoo Cheol-ho finished doing the laundry and started to watch Kim Tae-sung.

Then something strange happened. One of the guards with a dirty and bad personality called Kim Tae-sung over. Was he trying to make Kim Tae-sung run an errand? But he couldn’t ignore the smell that something was going on.

Yoo Cheol-ho quietly followed Kim Tae-sung.

---

Tae-hyuk became Kim Byung-gun and called Kim Tae-sung behind the laundry. Kim Tae-sung asked with a suspicious

expression,

“Do you have something for me to do? I’m sorry, but I still have things to do, so can you tell me right away? If I don’t wash all the clothes before lunch then they won’t be dry until tomorrow.”

“I have a task. I came to keep the promise.”

“Huh? What do you mean...?”

Tae-hyuk had made a promise with Kim Tae-sung in Blue Dragon Prison. He would break Kim Tae-sung out of prison and help him get revenge, in exchange for being provided with bombs. It has been more than a fortnight since then but had he already forgotten?

It was because Kim Tae-sung wasn’t expecting it at all. Feeling hope would just lead to despair.

“Do you remember this?”

Tae-hyuk turned his face sideways.

“H-Heok!”

It was the face of the criminal Kim Cheol-su, not Kim Byung-gun.

“Then I’ve return to the original appearance for a moment.”

Tae-hyuk changed back into Kim Byung-gun.

“A-Are you P-Phantom...”

“Are you wondering what I want from you?”

“...T-That.”

“It is simple. It is because I need the bombs that you can make.”

Kim Tae-sung gulped.

At first, he had no idea who caught him. He was attacked by someone wearing a leather jacket but couldn’t remember the face. Once he gained consciousness, he was handcuffed by the police. Then the seasons changed while in prison. Quite incidentally, he heard a conversation between two guards. The Bomber being sent to jail was the work of Phantom.

As Kim Tae-sung was locked in thought, Tae-hyuk licked his lips.

‘The Bomber is the only person who met both Seo Tae-hyuk and Phantom.’

He had caught Kim Tae-sung before he became a Noble. At that

time, he couldn't change his face with 'Disguise', or hide his identity with the opera mask.

After meeting with Kim Tae-sung and confirming that he was indeed the Bomber, Tae-hyuk knocked him out with the iron pipe. What if he remembered Seo Tae-hyuk's existence? Something had to be done.

Tae-hyuk confirmed Kim Tae-sung's psychological state with Hawk Eyes.

'He doesn't remember my face. However, he knows that he was caught by Phantom. Did he hear it from someone?'

Due to the Hawk Eyes attribute, he had a great advantage in psychological warfare.

"T-Then you will help me escape?"

"Of course. That is why I came. I've secured the escape route and hideout. But..."

Tae-hyuk shifted his gaze to a corner that wasn't visible from his position.

"...Kim Tae-sung. Someone was following you."

"Huh?"

There was someone there.



## Chapter 138 – Everybody Gather! #4

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From now on, it was the time to talk about secrets. What would happen if he hadn't used 'Spying'?

Instead of passing by, the person was outright listening. The spy only heard a few keywords, but it was lucky that Tae-hyuk noticed them now.

'It isn't a guard. An inmate? That means...'

This place was a deserted corner of the maintenance room. No inmate would bother to come to such a place.

'A spy planted by someone. The purpose is to monitor the Bomber?'

Kim Tae-sung had the best bomb-making ability in this country. In terms of public awareness, he was inferior to Phantom. However, any criminal organization would drool over him.

Tae-hyuk touched the gun that he had hidden. Bullet Time had to be activated with a firearm. It would work even if bullets weren't loaded or the safety device was still on.

'Now, let's check who the informant is.'

"Who are you?"

The person scratched his head and walked out.

“Did I listen to something that I shouldn’t have?”

“Eh? Yoo Cheol-ho?”

“Yes, that’s right.”

Tae-hyuk’s mouth curved upwards.

Due to the tunnel that Yoo Cheol-ho had dug, he had been able to work freely in Blue Dragon Prison. He had forgotten to return the favor. But they met again this way.

“What are you doing here?”

“I happened to accidentally hear you talking while working nearby... But I just came and didn’t hear anything.”

“Your saliva increases when you lie. I know that there was no work scheduled in this area today.”

Yoo Cheol-ho smiled and whispered,

“But Guard-nim spoke a very interesting story.”

It was a lie that he hadn't heard anything.

"You really did hear it."

"Haha! My ears are a little sharp so I couldn't help hearing."

"So what did you hear?"

"Oh, there is no need to hide it. Huhu, aren't you trying to help Kim Tae-sung escape from here?"

"Hrmm..."

Yoo Cheol-ho spoke slyly.

"And that thing bulging at your waist. Isn't it a gun? It looks like a pistol loaded with bullets, rather than a taser gun. Certainly, I don't think any guards would carry something like that around. Therefore, you are someone pretending to be a guard in order to help Kim Tae-sung escape."

Yoo Cheol-ho's reasoning was correct. As expected from the person who boasted that he was a genius when it came to escaping.

Tae-hyuk smirked.

"Don't they say that bodies can't talk?"

“I wouldn’t recommend that method. I wouldn’t do it if I was in Guard-nim’s position.”

“Why?”

“If you shoot a gun here, then the people in the building will hear and come rushing. Then Guard-nim’s plan will be disrupted. In addition, I am also interested in a jailbreak. I know a few bits of information. What is the difference if two people escape instead of one? Besides, I am confident in my hard work. I will be a well-behaved person who listens to your words.”

He wanted to join the team.

Tae-hyuk laughed.

“First of all, I don’t need to use a gun to suppress you. It looks like you have confidence in your physical strength. But I have this.”

Tae-hyuk reached into his pocket and pulled out a rusty iron pipe. Yoo Cheol-ho was surprised to see such an object emerging from a person’s clothes. A moan emerged from his mouth at the seemingly impossible action.

“Huheok! W-Where...”

“It is a simple trick. But your second reason is a little interesting.”

The middle of the jailbreak plan that Tae-hyuk set up needed a breakthrough. Tae-hyuk had Bullet Time so he wasn't worried about getting hurt. But if Kim Tae-sung got hurt, then the plan would be disrupted.

‘I should check how plausible his jailbreak plan is.’

“Huhu... Then can I join?”

“Well, first let me hear your plan first, Escape King.”

“Haha! Escape King. That is a shameful title.”

Yoo Cheol-ho asked with curiosity.

“How do you do that? You look like the guard, but your body type is clearly different. Is it a special make up?”

Tae-hyuk deliberately wore large clothing. But seeing through it meant that Yoo Cheol-ho had pretty good eyes.

‘This is why Yoo Cheol-ho is later known as the Escape King. Even so, Yoo Cheol-ho is still Yoo Cheol-ho.’

A wicked smile appeared on Tae-hyuk's face. He came up with a plausible plan to use Yoo Cheol-ho.

“That isn't it. You can see from this.”

“Heok! M-My face?”

“Yes. I am Phantom.”

“Oh, god...”

“You won't be able to find God, Yoo Cheol-ho.”

A bright smile appeared on Yoo Cheol-ho's face, like he had won the lottery. That person was surely Phantom! Being on his team meant that he could really break out.

That was how Phantom, the Bomber, and the Escape King formed a team to escape from Red Phoenix Prison.

---

Tae-hyuk returned to his original disguise and said,

“But there is one condition for you to join the team.”

“What is the condition?”

“It is because security is vital. Shouldn’t we trust each other if we are to be working together?”

Yoo Cheol-ho started nodding at the speed of 50 rpm.

“O-Of course. I absolutely won’t reveal this to anyone. I will keep the secret, even if a knife was held to my neck.”

“Good decision. Then I want to hear an answer: Why did you follow the Bomber? Don’t say that you were cleaning here. Well, I think I already have a rough guess. Someone ordered you to watch Kim Tae-sung. What if you tell them the story of the jailbreak? So make a decision if you want to be on the same team. Phantom, or the one who gave the command to you?”

“Ah... That...”

Yoo Cheol-ho’s eyes started shaking violently. It was evidence of extreme confusion. He had heard a lot about Phantom’s greatness but...

It was like he was a mind-reader! Not only could he change his face at will, but he might be a real psychic.

Yoo Cheol-ho seemed to be conflicted, so Tae-hyuk decided to push him a bit more.

“If you leave here, then it won’t matter. What do you have to worry about?”

“Kyak! That’s right.”

Yoo Cheol-ho nodded as he made a decision and said,

“I understand. I will tell you everything I know. Yes, I clearly need to explain since we are on the same team now.”

Tae-hyuk smiled at Yoo Cheol-ho.

Yoo Cheol-ho explained why he was watching Kim Tae-sung.

“...So that’s what happened.”

“Hrmm. In the end, it was the prison warden?”

“Yes, that’s right.”

“You are literally playing the role of a spy. What would’ve happened if it entered the ears of the other inmates?”

“Haha, I could escape from jail so it wouldn’t be a problem.”

The party moved to a more discreet place before earnestly talking about the jailbreak.



“Nobody will come to this place.”

“There doesn’t seem to be a tail this time.”

“Then I’ll listen to Phantom’s plan first.”

“Yes.”

Tae-hyuk’s plan was simple.

Red Phoenix Prison allowed one visitation day a week. It couldn’t be helped since the island was far away from land.

“During the visits, most of the guards will be assembled together. You will use a disguise to break through the main entrance. Then you intend to steal the ship in the port and escape right?”

“I think it is the simplest and best way to get out of here.”

Yoo Cheol-ho frowned and said,

“Of course, Phantom will be able to get out using this method. But there is a chance that Kim Tae-sung and I can be hit by a taser gun. Why don’t we do something else instead?”

Yoo Cheol-ho’s opinion was definitely valid. One person could

get out easily using that method, but it was a different story if there were more than two people. He should reduce the variables as much as possible.

“If there is a better plan, then I will listen.”

Yoo Cheol-ho started to talk about his plan.

“First of all, you should know the main feature of the Red Phoenix Prison. It isn’t equipped with proper medical facilities. So if there is a seizure or serious injury, the person will be taken to a hospital on land to receive treatment.”

“In other words, fake an illness.”

“I have a detergent that I packed in advance. After mixing it with water and drinking it, a person will look like they are foaming at the mouth. But with Phantom’s power, isn’t it possible to do a more plausible act? Furthermore, things will become easier if you disguise yourself as one of the transportation guards.”

Tae-hyuk nodded.

Yoo Cheol-ho created a plan in a short amount of time that took into account Phantom’s abilities. He truly was the Escape King.

“The biggest drawback to the original plan is that the transportation would be handled by the guards. If Phantom is in charge, then we can leisurely escape once we arrive on land. You

have the face-changing magic. Is it possible to change into anyone?”

“No, I need to meet them face to face and listen to their voice.”

The images of the guards working here passed through Yoo Cheol-ho’s head. There was definitely one guard in charge of transporting patients who was currently inside the building.

“Hrmm... If so, I know one of the right guards.”

“Great. You thought of all this in a short amount of time?”

“Haha. It is an impossible plan without Phantom’s abilities.”

Yoo Cheol-ho felt his whole body shaking with pleasure. This was the first time he felt this way. He was recognized by the great Phantom.

“When is that person working?”

“He finishes today.”

“That’s good. Tell me the name and I will go to steal his face.”

Yoo Cheol-ho gave the name of the designated guard. Tae-hyuk nodded and stood up.

“It will be lunch time soon, so let’s finish up. We will meet here again in the afternoon when the morning work is over.”

“U-Understood.”

“I will come.”

Kim Tae-sung, who had been watching the two people from the side, nodded in response. He intended to leave the escape to the two experts.

“By the way, Yoo Cheol-ho.”

“Huh?”

“What are you going to do when you get out of here?”

“First of all, I need to find the person who put me in here. I also want to find the high school brat who reported me. Then I’ll slowly think about what to do next.”

“I see. I wish you good luck.”

“Haha, you bet.”

Tae-hyuk laughed. Humans didn’t change easily.

Yoo Cheol-ho spoke as Tae-hyuk was leaving.

“However, Phantom.”

“What?”

“I want to be prepared. When is D-Day?”

“D-Day? Oh, you mean when will this jailbreak occur?”

“Preferably it should be this week...”

Tae-hyuk cut off Yoo Cheol-ho.

“Now.”

“Huh?”

Fast was good, but this was a little too fast!

## Chapter 139 – Everybody Gather! #5

---

Yoo Cheol-ho was excited as he was eating his meal. The moment he had longed for since entering prison was finally going to be realized.

The inmate sitting with him at the dining room asked,

“Did something good happen?”

“Kukukuk, it isn’t anything big. Don’t worry about it.”

“Ah, today is the special meal day.”

There were grilled ribs on Yoo Cheol-ho’s plate. It was a meal that only appeared twice a year. Yoo Cheol-ho picked up the meat with a spoon and placed it on the plate of the man who was slobbering.

“G-Giving this to me?”

“I’m not hungry right now.”

“Hah... But it is grilled ribs. Well, if you are giving it to me then I will eat it well.”

He moved the spoon and started eating at a tremendous rate.

Yoo Cheol-ho chuckled in a low voice. The ribs were so thick that it felt like chewing roots. Of course, this was still a luxurious dish in prison.

However, he would soon be able to get out of here. Yes, this evening he would eat sirloin! His smile stretched from ear to ear at the thought.

When he looked at the clock, it was time for the afternoon work. He went to the restroom, shaved neatly, and put on the cleanest clothes he had. After grabbing the detergent and a few camouflage tools, he was ready for the escape.

As today was visitation day, so the number of guards overseeing the work was much less than usual. Yoo Cheol-ho could roam around more freely compared to other inmates so that he could keep an eye on Kim Tae-sung.

“Who would think I would use it for escaping?”

Yoo Cheol-ho muttered and headed to the place where he promised to meet Phantom. There were already people waiting when he arrived.

“Ah, I’m sorry. I was a little late preparing some things.”

“It’s okay. It is hard to keep the promised time in prison. You don’t have watch or a phone to check.”

“Haha, yes.”

Yoo Cheol-ho felt some doubts as he answered.

No matter how he looked at it, Phantom... He seemed strangely familiar with prison. Surely he hadn't been a prisoner? Aish, it couldn't be. Phantom had the abilities to avoid getting captured by the police.

“Then show me what you brought.”

“Here it is.”

Yoo Cheol-ho pulled out a bottle of water. It looked like paint had been released into the water.

Kim Tae-sung asked in a trembling voice after seeing it.

“I-I have to drink this?”

“Phantom can change his face, but that won't help us get out of here. You don't have to drink if you don't want to leave.”

“Then it can't be helped.”

Yoo Cheol-ho wasn't interested in Kim Tae-sung and looked at



Phantom instead.

“I’m sorry, but can I check the face? Oh, I don’t doubt your abilities. Wouldn’t it be better to make sure?”

“Yes. Just wait a moment.”

Tae-hyuk changed his voice and face to the guard that he had targeted during lunch time. The guard was someone who treated Kim Byung-gun as his master.

“How is it? Is it the same?”

“Huh, oh my god... I wouldn’t have believed it if I hadn’t seen it with my own eyes.”

It was an amazing ability, no matter how many times Yoo Cheol-ho saw it. He touched the face, but the texture was correct.

“But it is hard to get out of here just with a guard. At the very least, the doctor’s medical certificate and the warden’s permission...”

“Ah, this?”

Tae-hyuk pulled out a piece of paper and showed it to Yoo Cheol-ho.

“...White paper?”

“For now.”

Then he moved his palm over the paper.

“.....!”

It had clearly been a blank piece of white paper, but now there were words written on it. It was a medical certificate stamped with the seal of the doctor.

“We will leave on the ship today. And if the person in charge tries to check, I will copy the warden’s voice.”

“Wow, wow, it is perfect!”

Yoo Cheol-ho looked at Phantom with respect. Yoo Cheol-ho only gave a brief overview of the operation, but Phantom was able to see through it and prepare a step further.

“This is your expertise, so you can check it.”

“...Wasn’t this clearly blank just now? But how...?”

It seemed more real than the real one.

“Then let’s review the plan.”

“Yes.”

Yoo Cheol-ho’s eyes were shining with the hope of getting out of here soon.

---

A transport ship for visitors was docked at the port. It was strictly managed as a ship for visitors.

The guard in charge of the ship raised his hand as a familiar face approached. It was a guard in uniform.

“Kim Sang-jin sunbae? Who are these prisoners?”

“Oh, two people suddenly had epileptic seizures, so they are being sent to the hospital for treatment.”

“I see. They are clearly suffering. Is that foaming I see at their mouths? Their eyes are also completely unfocused. This is truly...”

The guard clicked his tongue. Tae-hyuk prepared to board the ship with the prisoners who were tied up together.

Then the guard asked,

“I’m sorry but I didn’t hear about this in advance. Can you show me the official document and medical certificate? Ah, I’m not doubting Sunbae, but I will be punished if I ignore official procedures.

“Really? Here.”

Tae-hyuk extended some papers to the guard. The guard, who thought his senior was about to scold him, sighed with relief.

“Did you want me to call the warden?”

“Oh, the warden is busy. This is okay. Two prisoners suddenly having epileptic seizures... If there was one more, then wouldn’t it be a complete curse? They came in separately, but will leave together.”

“Is that so? Haha!”

Tae-hyuk put the two people in the prisoners quarters of the ship and locked the door. After some time, people started to board the ship. They were civilians returning from their visits. In addition, four extra guards boarded.

At the time of departure, one of the guards started checking the passengers.

“Huh? These people are?”

“Ah, I allowed them on. They are being transported by Kim Sang-jin sunbae. I also got confirmation from the warden.”

“It is awkward to have prisoners in proximity of the guests. Make sure the civilians are unaware of it.”

“Yes!”

“Then tell the captain to depart.”

There were 31 civilians, four guards, three sailors, and two criminals. Then the boat carrying Phantom started to sail.

---

As the ship sailed without any problems, an incident occurred. Yoo Cheol-ho and Kim Tae-sung, who had been locked inside, suddenly slipped out with hoods covering their faces.

Yoo Cheol-ho shouted,

“This ship has been hijacked!”

The atmosphere wasn't clear so the passengers left their rooms to look.

“F-Fight?”

“What? What just happened?”

Then someone discovered Phantom carrying a gun and screamed.

“Aaaaack! G-Gun...!”

“Oh, I won’t do anything so please don’t shoot!”

Tae-hyuk was currently Phantom wearing the opera mask. He entered the steering room and told the sailors inside.

“If you follow my commands, then no one will be hurt! All of the ship’s crew members and guards will gather in one place!”

This was broadcasted all over the ship. The scattered guards panicked at the sudden incident. They didn’t think that Phantom had been hiding among the civilians.

“S-Sunbae. A gun. Phantom is armed with a gun...”

“I know! Fuck, he looked like a nice guy on TV. Hijacking a ship...”

A white mask appeared before the two people who were talking.

“Who is the cool criminal? He is just a criminal.”

“P-Phantom!”

“You are armed with taser guns. It is a weapon that can be used against unarmed people. But I have this.”

He aimed the gun towards the guards.

“H-Hik!”

“It is a bit cliché but it is fun. Hands up! If you move then I will shoot!”

“.....”

Phantom easily defeated the guards. He gathered the passengers, guards and sailors in the middle of the boat.

Phantom spoke.

“Now, everybody is here.”

“W-What are you going to do with us?”

“S-Spare me...”

“If you listen to what I say then no one will get hurt. I guarantee it in the name of Phantom.”

The passengers inwardly sighed with relief. However, the guards were different. If someone had to die then it would clearly be one of the guards.

Everybody on board was gathered here. However, there was someone missing.

“S-Sang-jin?”

They started to look for Kim Sang-jin who was responsible for transporting the prisoners. The two hooded people were clearly the prisoners...

One guard asked with a despairing expression. Phantom turned towards him.

“Oh, Kim Sang-jin? I’m sorry, but I threw him into the sea for trying to rebel. Right now, fish are probably feasting on him.”

“N-No!”

Of course, right now the real Kim Sang-jin was eating chicken and drinking cold beer. It was forbidden to drink alcohol on the job, but sometimes it was necessary to survive on the island.



The guards on the ship didn't know this and were in shock. They decided to follow Phantom's words and didn't rebel.

Yoo Cheol-ho followed him around like a dog chasing after its owner.

“Phantom. I've tied everyone up.”

“Good job.”

“Thank you.”

At that moment, the captain tied to the pole with the navigator shouted,

“Release us! If the ship continues this way then it will be completely off route!”

“I'm sorry but I will be deciding the route from now on. By the time we arrive at the port, then the police will already be there.”

“T-Then...”

“I will steer.”

Yoo Cheol-ho asked him,

“Can you steer a ship?”

“Well, I’ve never done it before, but I’m sure I can do it.”

“As expected from Phantom.”

Tae-hyuk had the Vehicle Theft skill. It allowed him to steal anything with an engine and drive it. Tae-hyuk left the hostages to Yoo Cheol-ho and went to the steering room.

The ship had followed the currents and was floating aimlessly. Kim Tae-sung was unfamiliar with this situation and asked with an anxious expression.

“The engine is off. Is it okay?”

“The ship is mine now. Can’t I freely control it?”

[Crime skill: Vehicle Theft has been triggered.]

-This ship is now yours.

There was one drawback to the Vehicle Theft skill. It was that an embarrassing remark needed to be said to trigger it.

“Huh? What did you just say?”

“I just felt like I needed to say those words.

“.....”

Thus, Tae-hyuk stole the ship and headed somewhere else.

---

There was a frenzy at the port once the scheduled ship didn't arrive. The radio in the steering room started making loud sounds, so Tae-hyuk completely cut off the line. Then the maritime police were dispatched.

However, the three criminals had already fled after abandoning the ship at another port. It worked like a charm.

Vehicle Theft wasn't just about stealing the vehicle. After stealing the car, the person had to escape and avoid being detected by the police. Thus, there were two attributes attached to Vehicle Theft.

‘One attribute can temporarily camouflage the stolen vehicle and the other one will boost the speed. With this, I would be able to escape from an army.’

He used 20 points to raise these two attributes. In no time, he only had 30 affinity points left. The points were difficult to earn,

but he used them so quickly.

‘But it is worth learning them if I can arrive safely, so I won’t begrudge it.’

Yoo Cheol-ho kissed the ground after succeeding in the prison break.

“Hahaha! Freedom! I am free!”

“You look like someone who has been locked up for 30 years.”

“Haha! I am just happy.”

Kim Tae-sung looked around blankly. He couldn’t seem to believe that he had escaped from jail.

Yoo Cheol-ho moved first.

He approached Phantom and said,

“Hehe, Phantom. Isn’t it a shame to split up here? This is now a relationship. Shall we continue working as a team in the future? With my brains and Phantom’s abilities, we will be able to eat up South Korea.”

Tae-hyuk smiled at Yoo Cheol-ho.

Ah, he still had to take care of this guy.

# Chapter 140 – Everybody Gather! #6

---

“Really? We can talk about the details later, but I think we should run away first.”

“That’s right! Then what good plan do you have?”

Tae-hyuk pulled out the paper that he had used to make the counterfeit documents.

“I will apply what I have done before.”

As his hand passed over the sheet, something appeared on the blank white paper. This time it was a map, rather than some documents.

‘I wrote it in advance with Forgery and then implemented it with Counterfeit. Then, like magic, a map containing the escape route is created.’

Yoo Cheol-ho looked at the map and exclaimed. There was a detailed plan to escape the police once arriving at the port.

“But Phantom, can’t you easily escape by changing your appearance? Why this thing...?”

“I am fine alone, but both of you will need to disguise yourselves if you want to escape with me. Two prisoners have escaped from

prison, but the jailbreak isn't over until you completely get away.”

“T-Thinking up to here...”

Yoo Cheol-ho looked at Tae-hyuk with an impressed expression. He had forced Phantom to bring him along, yet Phantom was paying such careful attention to help him escape. Tae-hyuk beckoned and urged the two people to hurry.

“As time passes, the encirclement is narrowing. We have to hurry.”

“Yes! I understand.”

The criminals who escaped from Red Phoenix moved along the route on Tae-hyuk's map. The first destination was a nearby container box. These boxes could be rented for a week at a cost of 100,000 won. They were used for various purposes, such as temporary warehouses or housing.

“Dress appropriately as you like.”

Instead, there were various clothing like a department store. Both prisoners were still in their prison uniforms, while Tae-hyuk was dressed as a prison guard. Their clothing was too prominent.

“Hoh? There is a mirror. Is this to look at the disguises?”

“Yes.”

“I think a wig and some glasses are good for changing my appearance.”

Yoo Cheol-ho, who wore a clean suit and had nearly combed hair, looked like a white-collar office worker. Kim Tae-sung wore cargo pants, a plain shirt, and used some disguise items. Tae-hyuk wore a tuxedo used by chauffeurs of luxury cars.

“Now it is time to go to the safe house in a car that is parked nearby.”

“Did you prepare the car in advance? Can’t you use your abilities to steal one?”

Tae-hyuk inwardly smiled.

“If you escape in a stolen vehicle, then you are more likely to be caught by the police. A perfectly washed car will allow you to escape without detection.”

Yoo Cheol-ho asked,

“Then what about the safe house?”

“It is a shelter. Most people who escape don’t have a place to stay, so they lurk around their homes or friends’ places, causing them to



be caught. If you stay in this shelter, then you won't be caught for your whole lifetime.”

Yoo Cheol-ho nodded.

The safe house depicted was a house in the quiet countryside. It was good compared to the church that he was caught in. Of course, he could avoid the police by changing his appearance and stealing a vehicle. But Yoo Cheol-ho didn't want to show all the skills that he had.

‘Then let's finish this play.’

“Shelter... You also prepared for what would happen after escaping the prison.”

“I made a promise that I would help you break out of prison.”

Yoo Cheol-ho chuckled.

In order to fight the mafia, Kim Tae-sung's bombs were needed. The police weren't stupid. If Kim Tae-sung accidentally got caught again, then it wouldn't be easy for him to escape next time.

‘He is something precious that I should deal with very carefully. Except for him, of course.’

“And don't forget this.”

Tae-hyuk smiled as he watched Yoo Cheol-ho. It was like he was looking at an old relationship.

Yes, Yoo Cheol-ho was the start of everything. Catching Yoo Cheol-ho had started a lot of things, but now it was farewell. As Yoo Cheol-ho looked in the mirror, Tae-hyuk handcuffed his hand to a pole nearby.

“P-Phantom?”

“This is far enough, Yoo Cheol-ho.”

“W-What are you doing?”

“The promise was clearly to help you escape from prison. I have now honored my promise, it and now it is time to separate. We shouldn’t travel together.”

“But a true jailbreak is when the person gets away...”

“That’s right; however, unlike the Bomber, you are now useless. I’m not the type of person to carry around loose baggage. Then I will give you the last mission: be captured by the police. We will use that time to get away safely.”

T-Tricked! He had trusted the other person completely!

Yoo Cheol-ho cried out,

“Phantom...! If you leave me like this then I will tell the police the location of the safe house! Then you will never be saf...”

“Ah? That?”

A wicked smile appeared on Tae-hyuk’s face. He touched the map with one hand and something new appeared on it.

“Did you really think that I would show you the real thing?”

“Kuooooock!”

Yoo Cheol-ho shouted with a red face as he realized.

“P-Phantom! This isn’t over! How dare you betray me? I will twist your neck no matter what! Aha, ahahaha!”

“Really? But I am sorry. Once you go back to prison, it won’t be so easy to escape this time. You will receive very good treatment inside.”

Tae-hyuk smiled and pulled a tape recorder out of Yoo Cheol-ho’s suit.

“T-This...obviously the voice of the warden is recorded...”

“That is a lie. I wonder what is really recorded?”

Yoo Cheol-ho got goosebumps.

He had carried it around all this time, but hadn't thought much of it. But there was something other than the warden's voice recorded on it? The button was clicked and Yoo Cheol-ho's voice flowed out.

–The warden ordered me to watch Kim Tae-sung. He promised to give me some conveniences in the prison in return. Haha! Of course I am a mole. But who cares about my petty dealings with the warden, ohuhu!

“...N-No! T-That!”

Yoo Cheol-ho, who knew very well how spies were treated in prison, screamed.

“Well, I think it is time to go home. Please get along well with your friends.”

Tae-hyuk placed it back in Yoo Cheol-ho's pocket and buttoned it up.

Now he couldn't get rid of the tape recorder as he was struggled. As both hands were tied to the pole, he had to listen to his voice

coming from the tape recorder.

“Bye bye Yoo Cheol-ho.”

Kwang!

The door of the warehouse closed. The police would come here soon.

Yoo Cheol-ho bit his lip and muttered,

“Shit. If I knew this would happen, then I would’ve eaten the grilled ribs.”

---

After leaving the warehouse, they walked a few minutes and arrived at the prepared car. It was a used car purchased through Big Mama, but Tae-hyuk deliberately didn’t bring the car keys. As he placed his hand on the front door and activated the skill, the door opened and the car turned on.

There was a reason to use the Vehicle Theft skill. This way, he could apply the attributes that changed the appearance and boosted the speed.

‘It feels strange because I am stealing something I own. Before I know it, my right and left hands might automatically steal...’

Tae-hyuk gestured and Kim Tae-sung got on the back seat.

“I didn’t think you would abandon him like this.”

“He is an uninvited guest. Plus, didn’t I say that I would help him escape from prison? I made sure to keep my promise.”

“I want you to keep your promise to me.”

Kim Tae-sung escaped in order to get revenge on the group that killed his family. He promised to make bombs in return for Phantom’s help.

“Of course.”

As he drove along a quiet country road, breaking news appeared on the radio.

-...One of the prisoners who escaped from Red Phoenix Prison has been arrested by the police. The police are using all of their efforts to arrest the remaining one...

“He was captured safely. Once he returns, he will be greeted enthusiastically by his friends as well as the warden.”

“Haha...”

After one hour, the downtown area of the city appeared. Tae-hyuk's hideaway was a small officetel located between other buildings.

Kim Tae-sung entered the room and asked,

“Isn't this a place with many people? I thought the hideout would be in a quiet rural village.”

“It is actually more dangerous in the countryside.”

“Is that so...?”

“The countryside has an open atmosphere. The individuals there know everything about each other. In that respect, an officetel or an apartment is safer. Even if a person dies next time, they can be left there for several months.”

“Haha, I agree. Then I will be working here?”

“Yes. You will make the bombs here.”

The room was perfectly prepared for it.

“Even the most important ventilation system is set up. Often people only think about the materials and tools.”

“It will be inconvenient if someone wonders about the smell. There is no need to create too much. One a day is enough.”

“I understand.”

Kim Tae-sung's eyes flashed as he checked the equipment.

“Tell me if there is something missing and I will prepare it for you.”

“Then let me ask you one thing: What are you going to do with my bombs?”

Kim Tae-sung had killed innocent people in the past, but that was for the sake of revenge. If Phantom's purpose was to kill civilians...

Phantom was wearing an opera mask made of plaster over his face. Kim Tae-sung felt like the mask smiled.

“Right now, China's, Russia's, and Japan's mafias are all gathering in South Korea. This place will soon be their battleground, and I want to stop that. Of course, I don't want to be a hero of justice. One of them has what I want.”

“Y-You will deal with all of them by yourself?”

“Of course, I won't be able to do it alone. That is why I am



gathering criminals.”

“Haha...”

Kim Tae-sung noticed that he was one of them. Tae-hyuk took off his shoes and entered the room. It was like a university laboratory filled with various tools. But this wasn't the end. There were home appliances and multimedia equipment. If there was enough food, someone would be able to stay here for several months.

Tae-hyuk headed towards the Bomber's workshop. There was something made of plaster on the table. Kim Tae-sung followed behind Tae-hyuk and muttered as he saw it.

“Opera mask...?”

It was the same as the mask that was on Phantom's face. Phantom picked it up and approached the Bomber. Then he placed it on the Bomber's face.

Phantom opened his firmly closed mouth.

“—From now on, you are Phantom.”

# Chapter 141 – Everybody Gather! #7

---

The Bomber's jailbreak!

He was an atrocious criminal who made bombs with great power designed to commit terrible acts. It was a case that overturned the whole country. But the problem was what led to the breakout.

“Did you sense home?”

“.....”

“Wah? Did you know? I'll tell you the truth. You're returning home in two hours, you really do have a homing instinct.”

Yoo Cheol-ho glared at the investigator in charge of questioning him.

“Investigator-nim. Let's be honest here since we know each other so well. Give me a pen and I will tell you who the leader that escaped with Kim Taesung is, and everything else you want to know.”

The investigator clicked his tongue and muttered,

“Is it because you escaped from jail twice? Well, it is good that this will end quickly.”

“Instead, I have one condition.”

“What is it?”

“Once the investigation is finished, I want to be sent to another prison...”

“If you cooperate with the investigation, then I’ll see what I can do.”

Thus, the whole truth behind the Red Phoenix escape was revealed by Yoo Cheol-ho. A groan emerged from the mouth of the investigator.

“Kuoooooh... P-Phantom and the Bomber have joined hands. If the commissioner hears about this, then he will have a headache for a while.”

“Yes, that’s right. This time, I didn’t break out because I wanted to. I was forced into it due to Phantom... Doesn’t Investigator-nim know about his tricks?”

Then the investigator laughed,

“Really? Then this is also fake?”

He pulled out the tape recorder that had Yoo Cheol-ho’s voice recorded on it. Yoo Cheol-ho’s eyes trembled as he saw it.

“P-Phantom has the ability to change his face and voice into me...”

“Really? Then I should discuss it with the warden. Anyway, I won’t forget what you told me and will talk to the warden.”

What? Tell the warden?

Yoo Cheol-ho’s face turned white.

The tape recorder showed that he betrayed the warden. He would be dead if it entered the warden’s ears!

---

The newly appointed police commissioner, Chae Bum-ho, was eating in a high class Korean restaurant. There were delicacies such as abalone, sea bream sashimi, roasted eel, fresh roe, etc. Even so, Chae Bum-ho’s reaction wasn’t impressed.

A man in his 30s with a scary atmosphere was sitting in front of Chae Bum-ho.

“Yes, Mister Park. Did you get the job done?”

Mister Park put wasabi on top of the sea bream sashimi and said,

“Don’t worry. The evidence that Hyung-nim is related to us has been disposed of.”

“Really? If that is so... You went through a lot of effort.”

Chae Bum-ho’s stiff face became much softer. He grabbed his spoon and started to eat the rice.

Mister Park finished the sashimi and reached out for the grilled beef. The charcoal gave it a mouth-watering scent.

“The meat is very soft.

“I see. Eat a lot.”

“Ah right, today Hyung-nim is a reborn person who has nothing to do with the Yakuza. Congratulations. Let’s have a drink.”

Mister Park passed a cup of sake to Chae Bum-ho.

Their words were dangerous, but there was no need to worry about anyone overhearing. This was a place where large business executives and high ranking bureaucrats gathered. Thus, it was very strictly managed. Secret conversations shared over meals wouldn’t be leaked.

Chae Bum-ho and Mister Park drank the sake and smiled at each other.

“To the newly reborn Hyung-nim!”

Chae Bum-ho smiled in satisfaction.

With this, he could focus on catching Phantom without any worries. It hadn't been exposed, but the Japanese Yakuza were already deeply embedded in South Korean society.

“Then I would like your help with Phantom, as well as in covering up the Taesung Group case.”

“Kukukuk. Phantom doesn't know how big of a group he has declared war against. Only the tip of the iceberg has been revealed.”

Chae Bum-ho was the local police commissioner. He was credited for finishing a mysterious illness case and was considered a genius at taking opportunities when they arose. Although the Bomber had run amok, he was now in prison. That case wouldn't be mentioned again.

“Please note that the research is proceeding safely. This is all thanks to Hyung-nim's efforts.”

“Yes. This time, pay more attention to managing the staff.”

“Haha! Don't worry. Sooner or later, I will use this face to enter

the political arena. Then we can focus more on the research.”

Chae Bum-ho smiled at Mister Park’s words.

“Then let’s talk about Phantom.”

Mister Park replied with a smile.

“He is our enemy. What other explanation is needed? The organization will lend its full support.”

“I heard from Kazuo hyung-nim. Sooner or later, a major Phantom extermination plan will be implemented. What? Working with criminals to catch criminals? I will let him know whose home he is playing in.”

The Yakuza and police had a common goal to catch Phantom.

At that moment, a vibration was heard.

“Hyung-nim. Is that a message?”

“...I told them not to contact me while I was eating.”

“There must be an important reason. You can check it out.”

Chae Bum-ho looked at the screen of his phone and was at a loss

for words.

“Hyung-nim?”

Mister Park got up and approached Chae Bum-ho, who had become like a stone statue. What the hell was going on?

He looked at Chae Bum-ho’s phone. It was written that Phantom was the ringleader who broke the Bomber out of Red Phoenix Prison.

“Hu, huhu, huhuhuhu...”

Chae Bum-ho chuckled in a low voice. Then he muttered in a small voice,

“You dared touch this area?! Yes, let’s do it Phantom. I will take it as a declaration of war. Yes. This is war.”

The next day, the police changed their policy from cooperation with Phantom to catching him. Phantom absolutely had to be arrested. The police declared a war against the criminal Phantom.

---

In secluded rural village deep in the mountains of Gangwon Province was a place that tourists rarely ever visited.



It boasted only 20 households and even that number was gradually decreasing. However, there was a sudden boom a few years ago. A dozen or so robust men came to the area to do farming.

This was the first time.

In addition, the crops they brought were far more profitable than the ones previously grown. It was like gold was literally growing from the ground. It was delicious food for worms.

The village thoroughly restricted access of outsiders. The advantage was that people couldn't enter the village unless they crossed a long bridge between two cliffs.

“Hwang-ssi! I heard that last month's harvest was 2,000?”

“Huhu, it was 500 more than expected. It is because there was a lot of rain.”

“But the crops are also very good this time. If this continues on, then we will be able to harvest more than usual.”

“Haha. I didn't know that barley would sell for such an expensive price.”

The old man said this but he actually knew the truth. The crops being grown here were drugs. However, he learned that terrifying fact too late. The numbers written in the National Agricultural

Cooperative Federation (NACF) account was growing and the village was becoming rich. He could ignore his conscience. He hadn't been in touch with his family for several years. The village changing was exciting.

“Huhu, I am going out to work in the fields today...”

The old people followed behind the young people who came to town. However, the things they were carrying were strange. They were holding black rifles, not plows, or sickles. They were the escorts and watchdogs of the elderly.

As the elderly people arrived at the fields, they saw something red.

“W-What? T-That!”

“The fields are burning!”

“F-Fire!!!”

They dropped the farm equipment that they were carrying. The person holding the steering wheel of the tractor rushed out. The sight before their eyes was completely different.

The drug farm was burning like a bomb had gone off. In the middle was a white mask.

“A-A person?”

“H-How can he stand there without burning?!”

As the elderly people stared, the masked person disappeared like the wind. Only the mask he was wearing remained on the completely burnt fields.

A man with a gun muttered,

“Phantom...?!” (Japanese)

“P-Phantom...”

The monster with the mask disappeared like the wind after blowing away one of the Yakuza’s drug farms. Then the police sirens were belatedly heard in the secluded village.

---

Tang!

A man in a white suit and black sunglasses struck the table.

“W-What? 10 places have been hit in just a week?”

He was Kazuo Takeshi, the Yakuza member in charge of all of

South Korea.

“I thought it was easy to manage the farms. What is Mister Park doing?”

He pressed the call button with an agitated face. Then a familiar voice was heard,

-I’m sorry Hyung-nim. We are doing our best, but we can’t even find a shadow...

“Does that make sense? What is Chae Bum-ho doing?”

-.....

“A week. If you don’t catch that bastard in a week then it won’t end with just one finger.”

-U-Understood.

Kazuo hung up and muttered,

“How could one bastard do so much damage?! Damn.”

There was a nameplate reading ‘Park Il-bu, president of the Taesung Industries’ in front of his seat. (President is lower than chairman). It was a lower title than what his men called him.

However, he needed to hide his identity as a Yakuza member in South Korea.

“If the supplies are delayed then the research will be delayed, and our wish...”

It was at that moment. There was a flash, and the office where Kazuo was sitting in was hit with a huge explosion.

Kwa kwa.

Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

There was a huge thunder like sound in front of him. Kazuo died without feeling any pain.

Tae-hyuk watched the explosion from 500m away from the Taesung building and lamented.

“Ah, the timing was a little wrong.”

He wanted to make a speech before pressing the detonation switch, but he had accidentally blown up the building before he could do so. It couldn't be helped.

“Ah, I don't know.”

Tae-hyuk pointed at the burning building.

“Fire!”

It was a little late but he still felt good. He had destroyed the enemy's base and their supplies. The only thing left was to deal with the remaining people.

“Now, my turn still isn't over yet.”

The Yakuza and police were looking for him at the same time.

Nevertheless, Phantom's movements were unaffected. He was always one step ahead.

Tae-hyuk thoroughly destroyed the places run by the Yakuza.

# Chapter 142 – War Between Criminals #1

---

‘W-What are with all these forks and spoons?!’

Tae-hyuk gulped as he watched all the cutlery spread out before him. He had never been so nervous in a fight against armed gangsters...

His back was moist with sweat. If he hadn't been wearing the opera mask, then it would've been obvious that he was nervous. It was best to just watch what other people were doing and to follow along.

He shifted his gaze towards the person sitting in front of him. Her long, silver hair hung down to her waist, and her white skin seemed to reflect the sunlight. She was a woman several times more beautiful than the celebrities on TV. She was wearing a stunning dress that revealed her shoulders and upper chest. The perfect fit made her look even better.

‘Ah, what the? Eat! Eat! I'll follow you!’

However, the woman just watched Tae-hyuk's face and didn't eat. An awkward silence flowed between the two people.

“Doesn't it suit your taste?”

The woman opened her mouth and spoke pretty good Korean. It was like watching a foreign film being dubbed.

“I just wanted to have a meal with you. Surely it is delicious? I’m just not familiar with it.”

Tae-hyuk and Caterina were sitting in a French restaurant. It was a three-star Michelin restaurant so it was very expensive. It was a popular place to have dinner.

‘She rented out this whole place. She must be rolling in money.’

Tae-hyuk inwardly clicked his tongue. In fact, the three-star restaurant had their headquarters in Paris. However, the atmosphere and chefs were similar, so there was almost the same satisfaction.

Of course, the price was the same.

Caterina’s eyes widened.

“Omo, then should we leave this place?”

Normally, he would eat at a Chinese restaurant or at home. Tae-hyuk was a commoner who didn’t often eat outside.

‘If she asks then jajangmyeon is Phantom’s favourite food. Still, when will I get to eat? Um. Can I get chopsticks?’

“It is the first time I’ve eaten in a restaurant like this with a



beauty like Anne.”

“I-Is that so? I was wondering... You wear those clothes with such ease that I thought you were familiar with these types of places. I’m sorry.”

Caterina apologized and bowed her head.

She was the godfather of the Red Mafia that contained thousands of members. However, she was showing him a submissive attitude. It was possible because she felt favourable towards him.

Tae-hyuk was dressed in a neat suit due to the dress code. It fit properly, and was from a high end brand, costing at least five to six million won. In fact, it was a fake made from Counterfeit.

“Is that so? I saw the suit in a magazine and made it.”

“Ahaha! You are speaking like you made it yourself.”

“I did make it myself.”

“Omo, what a good joke.”

Caterina covered her mouth and gently laughed. Then she took the spoon on the outside and explained,

“It goes from appetizer to the mains so you use it in this sequence.”

“It is hard so can’t I just ask for a fork?”

“Fork? What is that?”

“.....”

Tae-hyuk was at a loss for words.

How could she not know the thing that he had loved during his two years of military life? At that time, Semon brought in a tray of food while dressed as a waiter.

“Young Lady. Please enjoy your meal.”

“Yes, Semon. Thank you.”

He really seemed like a butler at that moment. Caterina spoke after Semon left.

“Once the meal is over, we are going to see the Phantom of the Opera at the theater. Isn’t it a great trend in Korea right now?”

The more active Phantom was, the greater the number of theaters that started showing the Phantom of the Opera. It was a

big trend among the university students.

“At any rate, thanks for lending me your subordinates.”

Tae-hyuk had received Caterina’s help to deal with the Yakuza. He obtained information about the Yakuza that the Red Mafia had and asked to borrow some men. In exchange, Caterina had wanted a date with Phantom. Investing half a day on a data in exchange for the Red Mafia’s help wasn’t a big deal.

Caterina spoke with thrilled eyes.

“It is nothing, since I was originally planning on helping out this way. Anyways, I wanted to eat with Phantom like this. Thank you for pampering me.”

It was a little burdensome to have a woman who was 10 years older acting like this. Well, it was cute but...

“C-Cough. At any rate, I was able to easily deal with the Yakuza thanks to you.”

“Yes, yes! But I have a question!”

Caterina asked while wriggling her fingers.

“What?”

“I only gave you approximate information about the Yakuza. How did you know the enemy’s base and production areas?”

“That...”

All information was organic. If he found a small clue, then he could track it down the line to see the big picture. It wasn’t much different from putting together a jigsaw puzzle.

It started with a Yakuza executive who entered the country a fortnight ago. Tae-hyuk was able to get a lot of information by chasing after him.

‘It is great that I was able to get Mister Park’s voice and face.’

Tae-hyuk was able to disguise himself as Mister Park, one of the higher ups in the Yakuza in South Korea. He used this to gather information about the Yakuza. It was truly hard work.

Tae-hyuk laughed and continued.

“...It is a trade secret.”

“Oh, please~”

Caterina grabbed his arms and acted cutely, but it didn’t work.

“Anyway, Phantom is doing well. You truly are bright, I like it.”

Caterina said with shining eyes.

“But I didn’t think that Phantom itself would be used as a symbol.”

It was something that Tae-hyuk prepared to fight the mafia. Anyone could become Phantom with an opera mask. It was Phantom who installed the bomb at the enemy’s base, Phantom who knocked out the guards, and who was seen by lookouts. He made Phantom itself a symbol by introducing numerous Phantoms.

The first one was the Bomber. He was the Phantom in charge of manufacturing bombs. The former Red Mafia members took charge of enemy surveillance, intelligence gathering and installing the bombs. Even now, there were people gathered on the Internet who wished to become Phantom. It didn’t matter if there was a spy among them. Masks and some missions were given to them.

“You are welcome to wear the mask at any time.”

“Ahaha~ I want to be Phantom’s girlfriend instead. Am I lacking in any way?”

“.....”

Tae-hyuk wondered why there were only strange women around

him.

‘But she likes me. I can use this.’

Anyway, it was Phantom she liked, not Seo Tae-hyuk. There was no need to feel any remorse.

Tae-hyuk cut into the steak and said,

“Then let’s do the next deal. This time, give me information about the Triads. Then...”

“Ah, the next date will be at an amusement park!”

Tae-hyuk started sweating.

This girl was the boss of the Red Mafia? He was worried about the future of the organization.

‘They will be ruined.’

Caterina smiled softly as she checked her calendar for an appropriate date.

“Then let’s talk business.”

The young girl turned into the mafia boss. Tae-hyuk inwardly

muttered as she gave off a strange pressure.

‘I don’t know what tune she is dancing to.’

She truly was a difficult woman to deal with. Tae-hyuk once again realized the truth of the world.

---

He was fairly happy with his deal with Caterina.

However, he promised to go with her to an amusement park date two weeks later.

‘She is also desperate. If she doesn’t have Phantom, then she won’t be able to walk the tightrope for much longer.’

Tae-hyuk used his tablet PC to check the people who wanted to become Phantom. By sending them masks and giving them commands, the number of Phantoms in the world would increase.

“Aigoo. This uncle...”

He muttered as he looked at the profile of Shin Se-ho. This was the level of falling in love with a girl.

“Well, there are many places where I can use him. I’ll send him a message.”

Every person on here would jump with joy if a Phantom mask was sent. He was able to give that much fan service.

“What, a police officer?”

The names of police officers were mixed up among the applicants. No matter how he looked at it, they were spies.

Tae-hyuk smiled.

He could see how big Phantom had become in South Korea.

“Actually, I was going to use the Nuclear Bomb people. However, don’t they know my real face?”

Therefore, he thought of the temporary measure of selling Phantom’s name. However, it had a greater impact than he had initially thought. Even now, articles about people who had become Phantom were appearing on the Internet every five minutes. The police couldn’t ignore it and would be hitting someone’s house right now. Clouding the eyes of the police. He could do several different things at the same time.

Phantom’s popularity was literally exploding. Tae-hyuk recalled the information he got from the Phantom in charge of watching the Yakuza.



“The president of Taesung Group is the Yakuza boss. Will the rats step back due to this?”

Tae-hyuk had set up some bugs in the Yakuza’s offices. There was a Phantom responsible for monitoring it 24 hours a day. If the contents were important then it would be sent to him. Since there were several Phantoms in charge of this, Tae-hyuk didn’t have to worry about any information being missed.

Everything was a system created by Sun’s Cho Min-hyuk

‘It isn’t difficult once I view Phantom as the leader of a cult.’

Unfortunately, the Yakuza were being attacked by their own system.

‘The head of the Yakuza here is dead. Then what opponent will come out now?’

There were two likely outcomes. A newly promoted person will come from Japan. Or someone already here would be promoted.

‘The most likely possibility is Mister Park.’

He was the organization’s right hand man and directed the important tasks. There was no one else fit for the position.

‘Maybe the end of the mafia game will be a confrontation with

him.'

Ding dong!

“Delivery!”

The things Caterina sent him had arrived. No matter how close they were, he couldn't tell her where the Bomber was hidden.

Therefore, Phantom was the direct contact. He had several hideouts so there was no need to worry about being caught.

“The life of a fugitive was difficult.”

Tae-hyuk looked at the information prepared by the Red Mafia. There was a lot of information about the Triads.

“The Triads is a harder opponent than the Yakuza.”

The Yakuza's default business in South Korea was the hallucinogenic drug. He used that as a small clue to find out where the Yakuza were at.

But the Triads was different, as they participated in fetal organ smuggling, organ trafficking, kidnapping, etc. They did the worst crimes that weren't even possible in China in South Korea. He had to find the core and work backwards from there.

“There are 10 more places like T Medical Centre.”

There would obviously be a leader operating this, but there was no way for him to find it.

“Well, would they pop out if I keep on shaking?”

Tae-hyuk approached the man making a bomb in his workshop.

“How much bombs is in stock?”

Kim Taesung took off his safety goggles and said.

“Including today’s one, 13 bombs.”

“That is enough.”

Tae-hyuk smirked.

‘Toad, toad. Reveal yourself, or I will blow everything up.’

## Chapter 143 – War Between Criminals #2

---

“Ah, yes. These devices are a little bit like Phantoms. Should I call them Phantomz?”

Tae-hyuk muttered as he drove a stolen car down a small street. It seemed like he was thinking about something.

“Phantomz, Phantomz. Well. Good!”

Inside the trunk were special bombs made by the Bomber. Even if he could leave other things to the Phantoms, he would install the bomb himself. He wanted to reduce the damage to the civilians as much as possible.

However, the bomb would blow the whole building down. Many people not involved with the Triads would be affected.

“I’ve already started this. If so, I will carry the guilt.”

Tae-hyuk felt emotional.

Still, it was strange. Since he started to fight the mafia in earnest, he had killed many people, directly or indirectly. However, rather than feeling guilty, he felt like it was something he had to do. This was surely a criminal...

“Oh, I really am a criminal.”

He had always paid attention to his bodily and psychological changes ever since he first received the crime skills. The higher his stats climbed, the more he felt like someone else. It got worse after Phantom appeared and he started his activities in earnest.

“It is like there is another personality called Phantom.”

Tae-hyuk shook his head at the thought. He had a mountain of work to do. There was no time to spend on such introspection.

Biiik!

At that moment, a message arrived on his phone. He parked the car and checked the message. It was from a Phantom.

-I can confirm that this medical centre is involved in organs trafficking. There are traces of Chinese mail being sent and received from the computer in the head office. The information...

His Phantoms were doing a lot of work.

“Hyu...how much money have I spent on this?”

Because there were so many people looking for Phantom, all communication had to be through burner phones. He also hired a hacker through Moonlight Flower to disperse the call history. But this wasn't the end.

“The activity fees for the Phantoms are coming from my pocket... There will be a deficit this month.”

All the savings he earned in the meantime were shrinking at the speed of light. Well, if he found the Yamashita gold, then he could get back his money a thousand times over.

There was no need to look at all of the message. The place he was entering now was run by the Triads. Things similar to the events of the Doll Play incident would be going on.

“Plus, it is right next to a port so it is easy to move things.”

Tae-hyuk ordered the Phantoms to retreat from the medical centre. Except for the operating rooms that were deep underground, it was an ordinary medical facility. The core personnel such as the doctors and guards were people dispatched from the Triads. But in addition to them, it was necessary to have people who would operate the medical centre.

In other words, there were plenty of gaps.

‘From the second floor upwards, general patients are hospitalized. Then the operating rooms are only underground?’

He wanted to get rid of all the doctors, but he decided to endure it. He wasn't aiming at the destruction of the enemy.

“Let’s see.”

Tae-hyuk opened the trunk and check the bombs inside. There were many types available for use in different situations.

“This is too explosive, so the building might collapse if placed in the wrong area... This should be enough.”

He picked the right type and moved it to the front seat. On the surface, it looked like an ordinary briefcase. But if someone tried to forcefully open it or it was the appointed time, the briefcase would explode with a huge force. From now on, he had to install it in the basement of the medical centre and escape before it exploded 600 seconds later.

He opened the drawer in the driver’s door and saw the familiar Russian made pistol. He placed it at his waist and triggered Vehicle Theft. There was the sound of the engine starting and the car’s appearance changed.

The medium sized car became a luxury Mercedes. The camouflage attribute was to escape without being seen by the police, but he mainly used it to hide his identity. He changed his face into Cho Kang-suk’s and looked like the chauffeur of a luxury car.

“Counterfeit and Camouflage. The abilities are similar but I like the fact that I don’t need to worry by using both at once.”

As he arrived at the medical centre, the security guard watching the back door blocked the car.

“I’m sorry, but if you have an appointment at the medical center, then please go via the front way.”

Tae-hyuk rolled down the window and said,

“Didn’t you hear from the director? I have a reservation today.”

The guard nodded and said,

“Oh, you are a guest here. I understand. Come in.”

Tae-hyuk smiled and stepped on the pedal.

As he parked the car in a good location, the guard came hurrying over. He had realized something was strange.

“I-I’m really sorry. What is the name of the person riding in the back? I asked the director and there are no plans for a surgery today...”

“Oh, the person in the back?”

“Yes. I’m sorry. The atmosphere is tense these days.”



“The grim reaper bastard.”

Tae-hyuk hit the guard with the iron pipe that was hidden in the back seat of the car.

“I’ve smashed a few places so the guards are more careful these days. I have to watch out in the future.”

Other guards would notice over time and come flocking. Tae-hyuk grabbed the briefcase and headed to the underground area of the medical centre.

---

“Y-You! What are you...”

“Yes. Bullet Time.”

Tae-hyuk invoked Bullet Time as guards with guns gathered around him. His mind accelerated and time seemed to be going dozens of times slower.

‘It is surprisingly busy despite there being no booking today. Are they preparing to export the products?’

Tae-hyuk clicked his tongue and fired at the guards.

‘It is made using Forgery but it is almost the same as the real

thing. Isn't this almost an art?'

After becoming a Noble, the attribute Trace was added to Forgery. It had the ability to copy not only the appearance, but the function of the object. He could make bullets and guns if he had the materials.

However, Shooting Spree couldn't be used with his created guns, so he had to be satisfied with just bullets.

'How do you like the taste of the bullets that I sweated to make!'

As the guards all fell, Tae-hyuk leisurely turned off Bullet Time. Then a scream belatedly entered his ears.

"Kyaaak!"

"Argggghhh!"

".....!"

There was a security camera in the hallway. Other guards would see it and come flocking. He had to finish all the work before that. Tae-hyuk quickly left the medical centre after setting up the bomb in a place that was deep underground.

But it was strange. He didn't see any other security guards.

They weren't just responsible for protecting this place. They handled all types of dirty things from kidnapping to corpse handling. Thus, there were at least 10 security guards working at the medical centres.

Tae-hyuk clicked his tongue.

“Did they run away because Phantom attacked?”

He had already blown away five of the Triads' businesses. He used the method of blowing up the buildings.

Tae-hyuk disguised himself as a guard who he had killed already. Then he headed into the lobby of the medical centre.

“R-Run away! P-Phantom!”

“A bomb will explode! Take your valuables and run away!”

“What about the hospitalized patients?”

“Fuck! Our lives are more important, so why should we worry about them? Destroy all of the important documents and flee!”

Tae-hyuk smiled as he looked at the staff members running around. The man, who seemed to be the director, screamed when he saw Tae-hyuk.

“What are you doing? Why are you just standing there? Pack up and prepare to escape like planned...”

Ah, they even practiced running away. Tae-hyuk quietly pulled out the opera mask and placed it on his face.

“Oh, it looks like you are busy. I’m sorry. Can I ask questions at the reception desk?”

“P-Phan...”

“Don’t stutter because your panties are so tight. When will the ship come to the port to pick up the exported goods?”

“T-That...”

“It seems like it is hard to say. Do you want a little help?”

Tae-hyuk pulled out his gun and aimed it at the director.

“I’ll ask once again. When will the smuggling vehicle come?”

The director of the medical centre flopped to the ground and said,

“T-Tonight at 8 o’clock... But you can’t meet them unless I contact... S-So please, my life...”

Tae-hyuk pulled out the phone from the director's pocket and said,

“Thank you! You contact them on this?”

“Yes, yes. That's right.”

“Thank you. Oh, this is a gift.”

Tae-hyuk pulled out a pair of handcuffs and placed one link on the handle of the briefcase he was holding. The other side was connected to the director's hand.

“Don't try to open this. It might pop.”

“Aaaagh!” B-Bomb...!”

“Then I hope you can escape safely.”

Tae-hyuk walked out of the medical centre. A bomb was connected to the director's hand! The employees screamed and ran away after realizing this. The director shrieked.

“C-Cut it off right now! Bring a tool! Even if it is from the operating room, just bring a tool!

What on earth would be cut off? Tae-hyuk was very curious but just left.

The security guards were too busy trying to deal with the bomb connected to the director that they didn't chase Tae-hyuk.

“Will he be shocked to know that only documents are inside?”

The real bomb was in the basement of the building. There were 480 seconds until the bomb would explode.

Tae-hyuk started the car as he imagined what would happen in the meantime.

---

After the medical center, dealing with the transport ship was anticlimactic. The sun rose and broke apart the darkness of the sea.

“The trees will blow like this on the weekend.”

Tae-hyuk looked at the blood on his clothes. He thought he had been careful but some seemed to splattered on his clothes. He had shot many bullets in the darkness.

“I won't be able to go home like this. I should go to a public bath.”

After setting his next destination, he stretched and started the car. This time he was Phantom, not Seo Tae-hyuk.

---

At the same time.

The Red Mafia, Yakuza and the Triads were feeling various emotions.

Li Zheng's one was anger. The young boss of the Huaqing Triad, Li Zheng, opened his drawer after hearing the report from his subordinate. He aimed a gun at the subordinate and pulled the trigger.

Taaang – tang!

The subordinate instantly collapsed.

Li Zheng muttered,

“I thought he was just a clown, but now he is trying to bite. I can't just continue watching.”

Li Zheng ordered another subordinate to get rid of the dead body.

“Yes, I understand.”

Even though a colleague had died, his eyes were burning with loyalty. If Li Zheng ordered him to commit suicide, he would do it without any hesitation.

“Prepare a private plane. I will meet directly with Phantom.”

“B-Boss!”

His men were confused. He was a boss with countless subordinates, yet he was going to meet Phantom directly. It was too dangerous.

However, determination was fully entrenched in Li Zheng’s eyes. In the end, his men couldn’t stop Li Zheng.

The case of Yamaguchi Takeshi, the leader of Japan’s Yakuza, was curious.



# Chapter 144 – War Between Criminals #3

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Kazuo, who was in charge of the South Korean branch, died in an accident. Originally, it would've been a big event, due to a struggle over the successor of the branch.

Yamaguchi removed the seeds of the conflict by appointing a successor as soon as possible. Thus, Mister Park was promoted. He was Kazuo's right arm, and oversaw the general operations of the Korean branch.

Yamaguchi came to the conclusion that the South Korean branch could be left to Mister Park.

But...

“Phantom, Phantom.”

There was a big TV screen in front of Yamaguchi, with a mysterious man wearing an opera mask declared war on the mafia on it. It was like a scene from a movie.

“A declaration of war to the mafia by one man alone might seem reckless but... According to reports, it isn't the case.”

Then Mister Park, who was sitting at his feet, looked up and said,

“Yes, that's right. Phantom has done impossible things on his

own, and it's almost like he's using alter egos. So I investigated and..."

Yamaguchi pulled Mister Park up.

"You have been promoted, so don't feel the need to be so submissive."

"I-I see. I don't think I have enough resources to stop Phantom."

"Haha. Stop talking about Phantom for now. First of all, sit here. I will consider your opinion."

Yamaguchi was the boss of the Japanese Yakuza that had thousands of members. Even Mister Park was like a young child in front of him.

"Hrmm..."

Yamaguchi stroked his white beard as he read the information prepared by Mister Park.

"Phantoms. He really is smart. He doesn't need to come directly. Just move the symbol, and he will get what he wants. Could you do this?"

Anyone could become a Phantom by putting on the mask. They would move little by little and deal damage to the mafia.

“...No.”

The Yakuza became family by sharing alcohol mixed with each other's blood. It was a sacred ritual and betrayal meant death. They all worked under the Oyabun. However, the Phantoms became allies just by receiving a mask through the courier service. It was possible since Phantom used the symbol of the opera mask.

“How many Phantoms are there?”

“I don't know. Dozens or hundreds... No, maybe even more than that.”

The scariest thing about the Phantoms was that they were an enormous force on the Internet. Of course, unlike the Yakuza, none of them were willing to give their lives for Phantom. Most of them were just Phantoms for fun and felt satisfied to be involved with Phantom in some way.

The instructions also weren't too difficult. They just needed to deliver an item or install something somewhere. As a result, people with special talents started to gather.

“The group is less than two months old, and yet it is like this... Truly an interesting man. Mister Park.”

“Yep!”

“How much damage has he inflicted?”

“11 farms and 93 employees...”

Yamaguchi was speechless for a while after hearing Mister Park’s report. Then he coughed and said,

“Then the opponent’s damage?”

“...Sorry, there is none.”

“Huhu, I see.”

It was understandable why Mister Park had come. This might be the biggest defeat in their history.

“I want to see him directly. Unfortunately, that is too much. I should pull out the protruding nail, not batter it. Mister Park.”

“Yep!”

“From today on, the Hayabusa will help you. With their power, you should be able to stand up against Phantom.”

The Hayabusa! They were a special group of criminals with various skills. Hackers, card cheats, terrorists, magicians, scammers, etc. They were normally scattered all over Japan. Once

Yamaguchi called, they would gather to carry out his orders. Their abilities were enough to even assassinate a witness protected by the FBI. They specialized in intelligence and warfare.

Mister Park gulped. Yamaguchi wanted to collapse the Phantom system as well as Phantom.

“If Phantom wants to fight, then I will accept. With the help of the Hayabusa, find all of the identities of the Phantoms and kill them. Then all of South Korea will know that cooperating with Phantom will mean death.”

Mister Park looked determined.

“I hope to live up to your expectations.”

“I will let you handle this work directly.”

“I understand.”

Mister Park laughed. He also thought that this was the only way to deal with the Phantoms.

---

Caterina was the godfather of the Red Mafia in Russia. Her feelings towards Phantom were beyond obsession.

“Semon. What clothes should I wear the next time we meet?”

“Well. I’ll bring the best fashion coordinator and stylist if you want.

“Can you please do that? By the way, have you heard the news? After defeating the Yakuza, Phantom easily dealt with the Triads. How is this possible?”

Semon sighed.

Caterina didn’t have the dignity of a godfather. It was because she was lacking that Semon was helping her. However, Caterina had the ability to penetrate sharply into the essence of things. If she was raised properly, then she could someday become the queen of the Red Mafia.

But she changed after she met Phantom and he saved her life. She became a girl completely in love. She also ceased trying to talk like a tough man.

There was only one thing left. For the sake of the organization, and for Caterina as well, he had to put all his effort into making Phantom her partner. To do that, he would do anything.

“It is possible because the mask is the symbol of Phantom. And don’t worry so much, Phantom definitely has feelings for you. Why else would he meet you so easily?”

“I-Is that so?”

“Perhaps the Phantoms was a plan he had put on hold before. And there is one prerequisite to do it.”

“Prerequisite?”

Semon coughed several times.

“Phantom is a free body that doesn’t belong anywhere. If he is working under the name of a criminal organization, then no one will want to join the Phantoms.”

Then it was understandable why he rejected Caterina’s courtship. It was surprisingly positive thinking.

“I was too short-sighted! I really thought Phantom didn’t like me...”

“And look at this.”

Semon pulled out a letter with the mark of an opera mask.

“It is an invitation from him. He is inviting you to a party.

“W-Wah!”

Caterina laughed and clapped her hands. She seemed genuinely pleased.

“It is next week. Do you want to go?”

“Of course! Can you call the people you mentioned earlier? I want to give Phantom the coolest show!”

“I understand.”

But they were mistaken. Unfortunately, the Red Mafia wasn't the only ones to receive Phantom's invitation.

---

“There are Phantoms here!”

Mister Park led the Hayabusa members to a house outside Seoul. They had been chasing the trail of the Phantoms for three days.

An enormous amount of manpower and capital was invested to find the clues left behind. If they found someone acting as Phantom and killed them, the group wouldn't be able to act like they were doing now.

Mister Park checked his bulletproof vest and loaded bullets into the gun. It was a warning that anyone who cooperated with Phantom would die.



“They might have joined Phantoms as a game, but I will let them know this isn’t one. Rush in!”

It was like chasing the enemy king in chess. This time, he received Yamaguchi’s order to deal with the matter directly. He was able to get the Hayabusa’s cooperation thanks to that.

Mister Park clicked his tongue and murmured,

“First of all, I will spend the week killing Phantoms. Well, I don’t have to do too much. Once 10 people die, it will start dismantling on its own.”

Some Hayabusa members were monitoring from a van nearby. If the police starting moving, then they would leave in 10 seconds.

Kwang!

The door was smashed open and an ordinary family home appeared. There was garbage piled up, showing that it hadn’t been cleaned for a while. Despite the fact that it was a weekday, someone was watching the TV.

Mister Park laughed,

Yes, people who joined Phantoms had nothing to do. Mister Park aimed his gun at the person covered in a blanket and said,

“Ah, yes. It is wrong not to tell you the reason for your death.”

“.....”

“You will die. There are three reasons. The first sin is signing up to join the Phantoms. The second sin is harming the Yakuza. And the third sin...”

At that moment, the man took the blanket off and stood up. Now a grey mask could be seen.

“...Oh, I was surprised! Y-Yes. You are a Phantom after being sent the mask. Isn't it natural that you are wearing it? By the way, you are really into this, even wearing a mask when home alone.”

The man in the opera mask smiled. He was smiling despite a gun being aimed at him? Was this person crazy?

“Phantom cry!”

“.....?!”

“I made a joke because the atmosphere is too tense. This mask is scary, Mister Park.”

Mister Park's hands trembled at the familiar voice.

“D-Don’t tell me...”

“Yes. I am Phantom. I didn’t think that Mister Park would come directly to kill my men.”

“S-Shoot! T-This is the real Phantom!”

Mister Park ordered the man to be shot. No matter how great Phantom was, it was impossible for him to avoid bullets shot by dozens of people in this room.

“Really? It seems like your hobby is suicide.”

“W-What?”

Phantom pulled a bomb switch from his pocket. Then he calmly said,

“Pressing this will blow up the entire building. You didn’t think I would come here without any preparations? If you still want to then shoot.”

Mister Park slowly raised his hand. Yes, Phantom was a person like this.

“...Don’t shoot!”

“.....”

“How did you know I was going to attack this place?”

“You have pretty competent hackers but I am above them.”

Of course, it was an absolute lie. Tae-hyuk smiled.

In fact, he discovered the Yakuza's plan due to some events accidentally overlapping. He had created several dummy sites to recruit Phantoms. A few days ago, the traffic from Japan started to increase by dozens of times.

Tae-hyuk was suspicious and gathered information from the bug installed in the Yakuza's offices. But there was nothing.

In the end, he had to move to find out directly. Then, by chance, he saw that one of the Yakuza members were buying a large amount of coffee and chocolate while watching them.

The conclusion was amazing. It was the place where the hackers belonging to the Hayabusa were working. They bought a large amount of snacks since they would be working all day.

Tae-hyuk caught this scene.

‘A hacker who has great skills to not be caught on the Internet

was caught in real life. This is why detectives collect evidence.'

After knocking out a member who was buying snacks. Tae-hyuk disguised himself as that member and infiltrated the team. Then he heard Mister Park's plan. It was simple after that.

He deliberately sprinkled information about the Phantoms and lured them here.

"Kuook... Y-Your purpose..."

"Oh, this time I didn't come to fight. I just wanted to give you this."

Tae-hyuk handed an invitation to Mister Park.

"What? Party?"

"Yes. Isn't it difficult to continue fighting each other? Come to the place written there."

Phantom's invitation! Mister Park's hands trembled.

"Bah, who would go when it is likely to be a trap?"

"You don't have to come. Then do your best."

Tae-hyuk smiled and pressed the bomb switch. There was an uproar.

“Aaaaack! B-Bomb! Everybody get down!”

“Kuaaaack!”

Mister Park and the Yakuza members fell to the ground. Then the bomb exploded.

Kuwaaaang!

However, it wasn't a powerful impact.

“Cough! Cough!”

Mister Park coughed as smoke seeped from different areas of the house. It was a smoke bomb.

“...D-Damn! C-Catch him! Catch Phantom!”

Mister Park commanded his men with an agitated face. However, Phantom had completely disappeared.

Phantom disappeared suddenly with the smoke. He only left one invitation behind.

Mister Park groaned as he looked at it.

The words, ‘Mafia Game’ were written on it.

# Chapter 145 – War Between Criminals #4

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There was a tense atmosphere at Incheon International Airport as dozens of mysterious men, wearing black suits and black sunglasses, exuded a heavy aura. Whenever the letters on the board changed, they turned their heads in tandem, like a mob of meerkats, to look at it.

“....Those people?”

“G-Gangsters?”

“Aren’t they looking this way?”

“What are the police doing?”

The police could issue an eviction order if a group gave off a sense of oppression, but the black suits were standing away from each other, and couldn’t be accused of doing anything. The passengers at the airport looked at the dangerous men in black suits instead of approaching them.

At that moment, a plane arrived at gate 12. The atmosphere among the black suited men became tense as the door opened and passengers started to pour out. One man was visible among them. He was a sharp-eyed man wearing Chinese clothing. People started to talk as they saw him.

“Who is it? Unbelievably handsome!”



“Yes. An actor from China? Look at those clothes.”

“...I-I think you should be quiet. The men in black suits are gathering...”

The passengers moved away as the men in black suits moved and lined up. The black suited men bowed towards the person in unison.

“Welcome, President-nim!”

Li Zheng clicked his tongue as the black suited men greeted him loudly enough for his ears to ring. It was like advertising that the boss of the Triads had come. He was glad that the muscle-brained people called him ‘President’ instead of ‘Boss.’

Li Zheng was known as the president of a textile factory. He used that identity whenever he went abroad.

“I clearly said that only a few people should come and pick me up.”

“T-That, Phanto...isn’t he currently really active? If President-nim receives any damages...”

“It is groundless. Even if he is Phantom, there is no way for him to know my identity.”

Li Zheng laughed. It was impossible for Phantom to know that he was the boss of the Triads.

No, in the first place, Li Zheng didn't exist in this world. He was one of the successors gathered from all across China and eventually made the boss of Huaqing. He had been able to become the boss after beating many competing successors since his childhood. Li Zheng was a nickname attached to him because he mainly used a blue club during the trainee days.

That's why hackers trying to figure out the boss' identity couldn't find it. Even if Phantom had remarkable abilities, he couldn't solve a problem that had no answer.

Li Zheng beckoned to his men.

“Let's go.”

“Yes!”

The dozens of black suited men started to follow after him. Phantom had made a symbol of himself and created Phantoms.

Li Zheng was also a symbol of Huaqing. So his identity would never be known...

Li Zheng left the airport to meet his limousine ride. However,

one of the black suited men quickly followed behind him. He approached so closely that Li Zheng could feel his breaths. The black suited man brought his mouth to Li Zheng's ears and whispered,

“I don't think that is the case.”

“.....!”

The rest of the group yelled with confusion.

“H-Hey! What are you doing? Get away from Boss!”

“Did you eat something bad yesterday? You looked fine...”

“B-Boss-nim... I-I'm really sorry. Maybe due to the hot weather...”

Walking without thinking and bumping into the boss. Such rudeness couldn't be forgiven in the organization. However, the person in question just faced Li Zheng with a firm expression. Such behaviour could only be forgiven from the bosses of the other divisions. There were those who put their hands in their pockets like they wanted to blow his head off right away.

The insane man in the black suit said,

“I want to talk to you for a bit. Didn't you also want to meet with

me?”

The man slowly took off his sunglasses and placed an opera mask on his face. Phantom stood in the place where the black suited man was.

Phantom said,

“Hello, boss of Huaqing, ‘Li Zheng’. No, I should say No Name.”

“.....!!!”

Li Zheng’s body froze. He could understand Phantom standing in front of him.

...But how did he know Li Zheng’s identity? It was absolutely impossible. Li Zheng was so stunned he thought he was going to pass out. It was the first time he felt like this since he was born.

“It must be quite strange that I know your name.”

“H-H-how, that...”

Tae-hyuk said with a smile,

“Isn’t it written on your face?”

“.....”

He wasn't telling a joke. He literally read the opponent's name that was floating in the air. Of course, this was because he had Hawk Eyes.

Three days ago, Phantom had perceived a strange atmosphere as he watched the Triads. After realizing this, Tae-hyuk disguised himself as a member. The organization members seemed awfully busy. They cleaned up and brought in luxury furniture, as if a VIP was coming.

Tae-hyuk had seen something similar in the army.

‘When the commander visited my unit... The preparation took five weeks for a meeting that only lasted five minutes.’

It meant that someone high-ranking from China was coming. Therefore, Tae-hyuk joined the welcoming committee. Surprisingly, it was the boss who they were meeting.

‘No Name, unknown. Now I understand why the bosses of the Triads are veiled in secrecy.’

China had the One Child Policy for 35 years. The second born child of a low income family wouldn't be on the family register and would live a cattle-like life. They were left to roam the back streets and were often picked up by the criminal organizations. Among the numerous nameless people who entered, Li Zheng entered up

being a boss.

Tae-hyuk moved closer to Li Zheng. The other black suited men couldn't approach and just yelled,

“G-Get away from Boss!”

“You know what? If I wanted to then he would be dead 150 times already.”

“Ugh!”

Tae-hyuk pulled out an invitation and placed it in Li Zheng's pocket with a smile.

“This is a party invitation. Come if you can. I will be holding a very enjoyable game.”

“G-Game?”

“If you went then I will tell you how I found out your name.”

“.....!”

Li Zheng's eyes trembled.

Then he looked down at Phantom's invitation. The words ‘Mafia

Game' were written on it.

“You are inviting me to a mafia game?”

There was no answer. Li Zheng looked around like he had seen a ghost.

Phantom had already disappeared.

---

His men fell down in front of Li Zheng, who was dressed to attend a party, and begged.

“B-Boss! You can't go in there! This place is dangerous. It is clear that Phantom installed a trap!”

Li Zheng ignored the request of his loyal subordinates.

“If he was going to kill me, then I would've crossed the river by now. This invitation obviously means something.”

The only thing stated was the name of a hotel lounge. Li Zheng was one of 13 bosses and a symbol of the Triads, yet he was going directly to a suspicious place like this. His men had to stop him, even if it cost them their lives.

“I understand why you are worried. However, the place

mentioned on the invitation is a hotel lounge where many people gather. If he doesn't want to be infamous, then Phantom can't bomb it or go on a shooting spree."

"I-It is still dangerous! At the very least, guards..."

"Of course I will. Phantom didn't stay that I had to come alone."

"Huu... Then I will carefully select among our elites."

"Yes."

Time passed quickly and it was the time marked on the invitation. Li Zheng went to the hotel lounge with nine guards in order to meet Phantom. The hotel was gorgeous enough to be rated five stars. But to Li Zheng, who lived surrounded by all types of luxury, it seemed ordinary. Despite the fact that it was a weekday evening, there were a lot of people in the lounge.

Li Zheng went to the bar and ordered a martini. His guards stayed within 10 meters of him. If they were with him then he could flee no matter what happened. The guards would protect Li Zheng, even if they died doing so.

Then the bartender spoke to him,

"Customer-nim, I'm sorry but did you come to attend the game?"



Li Zheng was baffled. He wondered if Phantom was disguised as the bartender. But that didn't seem to be the case.

“That's right.”

“Oh, I almost forgot. He asked me to deliver this if someone like you entered.”

The bartender pulled out a VR machine from a drawer. There were safety goggles and a machine that allowed someone to see 3D videos, as if one was experiencing it himself.

“Hrmm... Who gave this to you?”

“He wore a black suit and black sunglasses.”

Li Zheng swallowed back his groan.

It was clearly Phantom. He searched with a portable detector but didn't see any traces of explosives.

“It doesn't look dangerous.”

In the end, he gulped and placed the VR machine on his face. The switch was pressed and the recorded video played.

-Hello. Bosses of the Triads, Yakuza and Red Mafia.

“.....!”

Li Zheng almost screamed as Phantom's voice flowed into his ears. He wasn't alone in this place? As Phantom said, the bosses of the Yakuza and Red Mafia were watching this video somewhere in the lounge.

—There are many surprised expressions. Oh, don't get too excited. You aren't the only ones who brought your men. They did as well.

If the bosses of the Yakuza and Red Mafia were here then Li Zheng could use his guards to secure them.

“...Anyway, it is a recorded video. He just wants to imitate a mind-reader.”

Li Zheng licked his lips.

It was the same with Mister Park and Semon. In fact, most of the people in the lounge were from the mafia. One wrong move would turn this into a battleground. It was the same as pointing a gun at each other's heads.

The bosses were forced to focus on Phantom's video. They would listen to Phantom's message first and decide what to do next. It was the best they could do right now.

–I guess you have some ideas. Then I will tell you why I called the bosses here. Until now, I have gone against all the mafia in South Korea. But I’m feeling a little weak. I think I should hold hands with one side.

Li Zheng gulped.

Phantom had been dealing with the mafia alone. What would happen if he joined hands with one of them? Then they would dominate.

–Now, now. This is a reminder that it is a joyous celebration. One week from now. I will prepare a stage where we can all play games happily. Then I will hold hands with the victor. How about it? Simple isn’t it?

Of course, some people will have a grudge against me. I’ll give them my head. If you want me strength then that is good. Of course, I can also get married. In other words, Phantom himself is the prize. Now, how about it? Are you getting interested?

“.....!”

Everybody’s eyes flashed at the contents. Playing the mafia game that Phantom created? If they won then Phantom was the prize. It wasn’t just at the level of holding hands since he said he would give them his life.

Li Zheng had something he wanted to ask. To do that, he had to

win the mafia game. Of course, he would cut off Phantom's head after receiving the answer. After all, he had killed plenty of his own subordinates.

Mister Park smiled. This was the stage for him. Getting Phantom meant that he could rule South Korea. No, he could get more if Phantom's abilities were added.

Caterina's face turned red. If she won the game, then he would marry her? To do that, she had to compete with the other bosses. Her life itself was a struggle. It was natural to fight to get what she wanted.

In the end, the bosses all came to the same conclusion. They would attend the mafia game!

And...

“““I must acquire Phantom...!”””

Thus, the mafia bosses made their decisions and their fighting spirits blazed.

---

“—Of course, victory is mine.”

Tae-hyuk smiled and listed out the conditions to participate in the mafia game.

# Chapter 146 – Phantom's Counterattack #1

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The preparation for the stage didn't take long. He used something that was already prepared so he just needed to fix it a little bit.

“It is nice to be here after a while.”

Tae-hyuk smiled with satisfaction as he looked at the stage devices he worked hard on for three days. It was always fun to appreciate the final product after working hard. There was a small casino in the space that had been empty until a week ago.

This speed was possible because he had the Machina. Tae-hyuk looked at the huge mechanical arm in the corner. It was the same as the one given to Kim Soo-bin after the Doll Play incident. It was just three times larger and it was possible to manipulate it remotely. He added more features with Forgery, allowing it to work at a tremendous speed.

“But who would have expected to play the mafia game here?”

This was the place where the Death Circus had occurred. Choi Sung-yeol, who had originally managed this place, was currently in prison. The various attractions designed to kill the participants were demolished, but the place remained intact inside the building.

“No one wants to buy it because many people died here.”

In the end, it was a property that would be demolished and then rebuilt. However, it was a building in a secluded spot that was far from the city centre. The land couldn't even be sold even if it was demolished.

Once he investigated, he heard that it was going over to the court auction soon. There were just signs prohibiting entrance and no guards. This was the best stage for the mafia game.

“Shall I open the casino?”

Tae-hyuk changed into the dealer's clothes and put on the Phantom mask.

It was time to meet the guests. At almost the same time, six people entered through the door. They used animal masks to hide their faces but it was easy to guess who they were.

The bosses of the Red Mafia, Yakuza, and the Triads, as well as their lieutenants. The fact that they were here meant that their guards were outside the building. Tae-hyuk decided to use Spying to confirm it.

‘Hyu~ there are 33 people altogether. The armed forces are fearsome. Are they trying to fight a war here? And where the hell did they all come from?’

Yamaguchi Takeshi, who also attended, asked,

“Are you Phantom?”

“You must be Takeshi.”

“Haha. You really do have a lot of courage.”

As he conversed with Yamaguchi Takeshi, he could feel Caterina’s gaze behind her cat mask. Tae-hyuk turned towards her and smiled. It was almost like they were long-lost lovers. Caterina’s body started to tremble.

Tae-hyuk have to forcibly restrain himself from laughing.

‘People are against Phantom so I have to use everything I can.’

Tae-hyuk looked at the people gathered and said,

“It seems like everyone has listened to the conditions.”

The conditions for participating in the mafia game were easy. Each team would have two people, the boss and their aide. They couldn’t bring any weapons that could be used to attack the other teams. Chips purchased with cash would be used to play the games.

Finally, the team that gained the most money would be given Phantom. The winner could decide whether Phantom lived or died, or if they wanted an alliance.

Li Zheng, who was wearing a leopard mask, asked.

“But what happens if I do win? There is no guarantee that you will keep the promise.”

“Don’t worry about that. The people over there are recording this. I am sending it to you in real time so you don’t have to worry about the promise being broken.”

Phantom beckoned and a handful of cameramen wearing Phantom masks waved as they stepped through the door. It was fantastic timing, as if they had been waiting outside. It was actually Shin Se-ho and his people.

Li Zheng nodded and said,

“Certainly, it is due to your popularity with the public that you have gotten this far. If the promise is broken, then we can release the video. Then you will no longer have your Phantoms.”

“Yes. I am putting the phantom mask as a symbol.”

“I understand. I’ll believe you.”

Takeshi turned to the other bosses and said,

“Before we play the games, let’s start with a simple self



introduction. Isn't it too childish to refer to each other by the masks?"

Li Zheng nodded and said.

"Li Zheng. This is Jin."

Jin was a huge, muscular man. It seemed like he would be able to win in a fight with a bear.

"Yamaguchi Takeshi, head of the Yamaguchi clan."

"I am Mister Park."

Finally, the group's gaze turned to Caterina. As the only woman in the room, they knew that she was the boss.

"Caterina. And this is Semon."

Li Zheng murmured in a slightly higher pitched voice.

"It is true that Russia is ruled by a queen."

Takeshi showed interest in Semon.

"Semon, the merchant of death? If we weren't meeting in this place then I would have a proposal for you."

“We can talk about a deal next time.”

Once Tae-hyuk tapped his fingers, several dealers came out with glasses of champagne. However, Caterina was the only one to accept it.

Takeshi muttered with a smile.

“There are dealers. This is temporary, but everything needed for a casino is here. Where did you find a place like this? It seems like you have avoided police surveillance.”

Tae-hyuk just smiled instead of answering.

‘Where did it come from? This is yours.’

After all, the Yakuza were the ones behind the Death Circus. Yet Yamaguchi Takeshi was the one who asked him this question. It was indeed ironic.

Tae-hyuk’s aides pulled out some bags. They contained the chips that would be used here today.

“The limit is up to one billion won. How much do you want to purchase?”

As the aides in charge of the exchange asked, the lieutenants

opened their bags immediately. The money inside was exactly one billion won.

Takeshi muttered,

“You are smart. If you did set a limit then I would’ve definitely won.”

He had tremendous assets and the chairmen of big companies under him. Casino games were a huge advantage for the rich. For reference, the money they were spending now would become Tae-hyuk’s pocket money.

It was like his savings account. Even if he paid the dealers and cameramen a 10 million won share, he still had 2.9 billion won left. It was like winning Lottery 1 at least 10 times. A person could live their whole lives on that money.

He had earned it purely through using Phantom as a symbol.

‘There was a time when I wanted to catch a pickpocket for the bounty. This is a new experience.’

Three teams bought one billion won each for a total of three billion won. It was literally a huge sum.

‘Can I get Ha-ran noona good marriage gifts with this much money?’

It was enough money for one person's whole life, but he didn't intend to end it here.

'I have no intention of leaving it like this. I will also get my hands on the gold.'

The lieutenants started to collect the chips. From now on, they had to earn more money than the other teams. The first one to make a suggestion was Mister Park.

"Surely there aren't things like slot machines or roulette here?"

"Of course."

"Hrmm... Isn't it still early?"

There were two ways to increase the chips here. Play the prepared casino games to make money, or play against other people. Of course, the latter option was more efficient.

If they won, they would increase their money while the participants would have their money reduced.

The Yakuza were confident in psychological warfare so they made the suggestion first. Caterina said with a smile,

"First of all, I would like to try my luck on roulette."

Mister Park was the one who made the suggest but the reply came from Takeshi.

“There is no need. The games to be played from now on don’t involve luck.”

“Hrmm, no way.”

“It is just building up numbers.”

“That card game?”

“You know about it.”

It was a simple type of gambling that could be enjoyed. Cards from 1-10 would be placed in a row and the dealer would place another card in the designated spot. The player would have to pick up the same card. The interesting thing was if there was a draw.

At that time, the ante would be doubled and they would bet again.

“Isn’t it literally a game of luck?”

Takeshi replied,

“So I would like to add some unusual rules. This time, cards from 1-100 will be used. And when placing the card, the front will only be shown for one second. How about it? Doesn't it seem interesting?”

It was a memory showdown. It tested the opponent's abilities.

“What do you think, Young Lady?”

Caterina pondered for a moment before answering.

“Yes. What about those from China?”

“I'll do it.”

Thus, the first round of the mafia game started.

---

The reason why Yamaguchi suggested the number stacking game was simple.

He was a master of Karuta, a unique game in Japan. Karuta involved 100 Japanese cards spread out on the floor. When a moderator recited a poem, they had to find the card containing the latter part of the poem faster than their competitor. The game's winning strategy was to see all the cards on the floor and memorize everything in a short amount of time. It was simple but required a lot of memory because the cards were mixed several times.

Yamaguchi had a tremendous memory capacity that was close to a photographic memory.

One second? He could remember at least 90% of the cards.

The game was fast paced.

“Up.”

“Up.”

“Up.”

Interestingly enough, the draws kept occurring. Li Zheng was the first to be eliminated.

“Damn. Are these people monsters? My limit is memorizing around 50 cards.”

Remember 50 cards in one second was great. Li Zheng knew this so he confidently accepted the game, but Yamaguchi and Caterina were monsters. The two of them kept the 1:1 wins until the 90th card.

“This will be a draw.”

After counting the remaining cards, this was the result.

“I was lucky.”

The two people continued to compete. Then an amazing thing happened. Caterina’s winning streak began. The funny thing about this game was that the first player could make money, but the second player would lose the most money.

Yamaguchi’s hands trembled.

“D-Did you memorize all 100 in one second?”

Caterina said with a smile.

“Let’s see? I was just lucky.”

Yamaguchi had a huge memory capacity that was close to a photographic memory. However, Caterina had the ability to instantly remember everything she saw. In other words, her abilities were superior.

“...I think I lost this one.”

“Thank you for your efforts.”

Caterina’s money surpassed 1.5 billion in an instant. Li Zheng



had 900 million and Yamaguchi had 600 million.

It was time for the second game. Caterina made a suggestion.

“I got a lot of money from stacking numbers so I’ve run out of steam. Grandpa can choose the next game.”

“.....”

The expression disappeared from Yamaguchi’s face as he heard those words from a girl young enough to be his granddaughter. But he wasn’t the type to be agitated by something like this. Rather, his head turned quicker in a situation like this.

“How about Blackjack?”

“Okay.”

“That sounds good.”

It was a confrontation with the dealer, so there wouldn’t be any big changes in the rankings. It was still early in the game so the 2nd place Li Zheng didn’t feel any sense of crisis. Yamaguchi was planning to use his winning method in the third game.

He quietly sent a signal to Mister Park. Mister Park pulled a cigarette out of his pocket and started to light it. The dealer walked up to him and said,

“I guess your boss has no rule about smoking in his presence. However, don’t go too far. Let’s just stick to one cigarette.”

“Ah, yes. I’ll do so.”

“Yep.”

Mister Park smiled widely.

This tobacco contained a special incense that blurred a person’s judgment. It was something that was almost completed. It boasted a performance that couldn’t be compared to what the Death Circus used.

People without immunity would easily be brainwashed. This was the result of years of research.

“Hu... It is good.”

Mister Park smirked.

He would make the dealers go on their side. Now all of the games against the dealers would end with their victory. How much did it cost to join here? However, he doubted they had prepared enough to win.

## Chapter 147 – Phantom's Counterattack #2

---

Blackjack used a poker hand and went through a 1:1 match between the dealer and the player. It was one of the few casino games that was potentially beneficial to the players.

Six players sat at different tables and were fighting the dealer in front of them. However, the atmosphere in the casino was grave.

Yamaguchi opened two cards that the dealer gave him.

“An Ace of Hearts and Queen of Spades. Blackjack.”

The bosses sitting at the other tables gawked at him. If there was a blackjack, then the player would unconditionally win against the dealer, and they would receive 1.5 times the jackpot. It was never a pleasant situation when they were competing against each other. In addition to Yamaguchi, Mister Park was also gaining a lot of money.

Li Zheng clicked his tongue and said,

“...Didn't he already win a few games?”

Caterina spoke from her table in the rear.

“He completely holds the momentum. I think this will end in the Yakuza's victory.”

“Lady Luck is a capricious person. Even if she is laughing now, you never know when she will betray you. It isn’t over until it is over.”

He said this, but the momentum was completely on Yamaguchi and Mister Park’s side. Li Zheng forgot about his own hand for a while as he watched the two people play.

The dealer’s open card was a 9. It was a good hand with a high possibility of going completely without bursting. The card Mister Park received was a 5. He boldly split it and received one more card. Furthermore, he bet an additional 10 million won worth of chips.

The newly received cards were a 6 and a 9.

“Well, he should take one more.”

But Mister Park stood firm. It was hard to win unless the dealer got a bust.

“The dealer’s second card is a 6. If this happens, there will be one more card... Oh my god. The next card is a 10? T-Then isn’t the dealer busted... Mister Park won with 11 and 14? I don’t know about 14, but he should’ve absolutely taken another card when it was at 11 points!”

It was so strange that he suspected there was a deal with the

dealer. The dealer's winning percentage of 50% was deliberately decreased to 20%... No, it was decreased to 10%.

In the meantime, Mister Park made extreme bets that raised his dividend. And victory.

“.....”

It was ridiculous. Li Zheng swallowed back his groan. There were too many things he didn't understand.

Meanwhile, the number of chips between the two people had reversed.

“The house has 1.53 billion won and I have 1.1 billion won. And the Japanese 1.2 billion won...”

Caterina's chips were almost intact. However, her chips had swelled a little bit. She didn't lose any chips due to her stable betting. Her meticulousness could be seen here as well.

Li Zheng gained 200 million won. He had started with 900 million so that was quite good. He made bold bets and had a clear understanding of when to stop to increase his odds.

“...But haven't they doubled their chips in an hour? No matter how I look at it, that is impossible without buying off the dealer.”

Caterina licked his lips and said,

“Phantom is the one who prepared the things here. Do you understand what I mean?”

“Um...”

The Yakuza might have held hands with Phantom to put together a scam. All of the people here were playing the mafia game to obtain Phantom. If someone was already working with Phantom, then there was no reason to come here.

Of course, the Yakuza weren't winning every game. However, when they won, their profits were huge. They won so much that it was enough to be called a gambling god. Meanwhile, the Yakuza had made another bet and picked up 90 million won worth of chips. It was huge sum for such a short period of time.

“But the two people are playing together.”

The Yakuza were gaining a huge amount of money due to both Mister Park and Yamaguchi. In most cases, if the subordinate was unsure of victory then they would forfeit. This meant...

“There must be a secret plan to win.”

Li Zheng squinted as he watched the Yakuza playing.

There had to be some trick. If he could find it, then he could reverse the situation.

---

Caterina spoke carefully to her subordinate so that the other teams couldn't hear.

“Semon. What do you think?”

“The time limit for playing this game is 100 minutes, which is already more than half over. If both of you continue making money at the same rate, they won't be able to surpass you.”

“Hrmm. that's a good thing. So what do you think is their secret to such great odds?”

“I'm sorry. Unless the Yakuza are incredibly lucky, I can only think that they joined hands with Phantom.”

“Phantom didn't ally with the Yakuza. If that were so, then there would be no point in playing this game.”

“It might be a trap for the Yakuza to kill us.”

“...Hrmm.”

Caterina gave a subtle groan. The possibility wasn't 0%. But even

so, she couldn't believe it.

“Phantom had many chances to kill us if he wanted. Not long ago, on our date...”

“He might have changed his mind since then.”

“Either way, I can't believe that Phantom has joined hands with the Yakuza. Isn't there a chance that they have psychic powers?”

“Haha, perhaps.”

Semon agreed with the ridiculous comment.

By the way, it was the right answer. Mister Park gave a sign to the dealer using his fingers, which meant to let him win. He had used the Hallucinogenic Incense to make a puppet out of the dealer and then used the dealer as a card shark.

After that, he flipped over his palm. It was a sign to stop giving him cards. Using the dealer as a card shark easily led to the Yakuza's victory.

Yamaguchi Takeshi asked in a small voice.

“Mister Park. How much do you have in chips now?”



“730 million.”

“I have 820 million, so if we combine both of our stacks, that is a total of 1.55 billion.”

Mister Park laughed.

“As it happens, it is the same as the Red Lady.”

“Huhuhu, we both have exactly 1.55 billion won worth of chips. There are five minutes left so we can’t relax.”

“If the third game picked requires a dealer...”

“Our victory.”

“Haha. You did a really good job.”

“The one who controls the dealer will become the king of the casino. The other teams have also prepared a winning strategy, but it seems like ours is the best.”

“Wait a minute. Please refrain from talking. The Red Lady is coming.”

“Hmph!”

“Excuse me. I’m sorry but can I talk to you for a minute?”

Caterina and Semon, who were likely to lose the number one spot, came up to the Yakuza. The smiles disappeared from the Yakuza member’s faces.

Yamaguchi asked,

“What is it?”

“I’m sorry but can we change seats? It feels like you might have something with the dealer.”

“Huhu, that isn’t the case. But I will ease your suspicions. I’ll change seats.”

“Yes, thank you.”

The time remaining was five minutes. If she didn’t earn the same amount of chips as the Yakuza then the rankings would reverse.

Caterina bit her lip and shifted her gaze to Semon. One of Semon’s eyes started trembling.

“Phew...”

Caterina sighed with relief. Fortunately, Semon sent her the

signal that she wanted. It meant he had succeeded in counting all the cards on the table that the Yakuza had been playing at. In order to prepare for this situation, she had ordered Semon to watch the Yakuza's table. Semon, who had terribly good eyesight, was able to see all the card patterns on the table.

“Since the cards have been counted, I can unconditionally make money. I need to at least tie with the Yakuza so that we start from the same point in the next game...”

She had the ability to remember everything she saw and Semon was a genius at strategy. She was confident that she could win any game if the conditions were the same.

The time remaining was five minutes. The last hand of Blackjack began.

---

Caterina sighed with relief.

“Hu... There was no support. Still, I narrowed the gap in the game against the dealer....”

She has won an additional 30 million won. It was the same with the Yakuza. In the end, the Red Mafia and Yakuza were tied at exactly 1.58 billion won.

In the meantime, Phantom appeared and summarized the situation.

“I will do an intermediate check. The Red Mafia and the Yakuza both have 1.58 billion won, while the Triads have 1.14 billion won.”

The chips acquired by the three groups totaled to 1.3 billion won. It was a tremendous return since they started at three billion.

Li Zheng clicked his tongue.

“Everybody is great. I am good at the games but... I never thought I would be the lowest.”

Caterina said with a smile.

“There is still the final game. Everybody has their own area of expertise, so why don't you choose one?”

“Do you mean me?”

“I don't care.”

Yamaguchi's eyes flashed.

“Haha. What are the young people talking about without me?”

“It is about who should pick the last game. I think it should be the one with the lowest amount of money.”

Currently, the Triads had the lowest amount of money. There was a high probability that they would pick a game that relied on abilities rather than luck. Caterina was confident about winning in a head-to-head competition.

Li Zheng would choose the last game. Yamaguchi thought it wasn't a bad proposal.

“I will listen to what it is first.”

If it involved the dealer then he would absolutely win. He would listen to the game and accept if it was appropriate. If the game didn't need a dealer then he would use an excuse to play another game.

Li Zheng said,

“Then how about Bluff Poker?”

It was a game where they placed a card on their forehead that only the opponent could see. The success or failure of their bluffs played a huge role on who would win. As it happened, Tae-hyuk played this game at the Death Circus.

Yamaguchi nodded. In order to play Bluff Poker, a dealer was required to split the cards. He could ask the dealer to secretly tell him what his card was.

“It is fine with me. Little Lady?”

“I would also like to play Bluff Poker.”

Due to being at the bottom, Li Zheng added one condition.

“The lieutenants might look at the cards and secretly tell you. Therefore, this time I would like to fight with just the three of us. How about it?”

“Hrmm... Then send out the lieutenants?”

“Exactly.”

“It doesn’t matter to me.”

“I am fine with that.”

“Huhu... Then let’s get started right away.”

Caterina’s winning strategy. Yamaguchi’s winning strategy. Bluff Poker was a game where all these winning strategies could be played. There was no reason to resist.

However, Li Zheng had a counterattack that could destroy all of this.

Mister Park, Jin, and Semon left once Li Zheng gave a signal. The three remaining were the bosses.

In addition, there were the cameramen and dealers.

“Then let’s start the final round of the mafia game.”

“Yes.”

At that moment, Li Zheng spoke some strange words.

“Hu, huhu... The game will end with my victory.”

It sounded like a prophecy.

---

Phantom watched the mafia game through the TV. It was the place where the spectators had watched the Death Circus.

Phantom drank coke from a champagne glass and muttered,

“Coke is cheaper than a bottle of wine that costs hundreds of thousands of won. By the way, everyone is very confident. Just looking at their expressions, everyone thinks that they will win.”

Phantom licked his lips.

“I’m sure they found their own winning strategy. But did you know? I made it like that on purpose.”

He knew about Caterina’s remarkable memory and included number games. He knew that Mister Park had the incense. So he set up a casino where the dealers could be taken advantage of.

And...

“For Li Zheng, I placed a few game conditions.”

On the TV screen, Jin knocked out Mister Park and Semon with a weapon.

“Obviously, I told them not to bring any weapons inside, but sniper threats from outside are acceptable.

Phantom deliberately created loopholes for victory. His purpose was to bring them here. All of this without knowing that it was a trap prepared by Phantom.

Li Zheng implemented his plan.



## Chapter 148 – Phantom's Counterattack #3

---

Bluff Poker was basically a game consisting of 20 cards numbered from 1-10. Once the dealer drew a card and placed it in front of the player, they would raise it to their forehead without checking it. They would look at the opponent's card and make a bet.

Yet something strange was happening. Caterina had the perfect poker face and freely used card counting. She also had an eye for seeing through her opponent's bluff so she didn't need a lie detector. However, she couldn't win even once.

“Huu, huuuu...”

Caterina groaned tearfully.

It was the same with Yamaguchi.

“Haha.”

Due to Mister Park's schemes, the dealers here were loyal servants of the Yakuza. When he gave a gesture, they would either deal him the card he wanted, or tell him what the opponent had. Even so, he failed to win even once.

Li Zheng laughed and tapped the table with his fingers.

“Am I not winning too much alone? I'm truly very sorry about

this.”

Li Zheng’s funds, which started at 1.14 billion won, suddenly increased by 200 million. On the other hand, Yamaguchi and Caterina’s money had been reduced by 100 million each.

Yamaguchi clicked his tongue as he looked at Li Zheng.

“I had a lot of confidence in this game, but it seems like you came up with the best winning strategy.”

It was a face that Yamaguchi badly wanted to slice apart with a samurai sword. The fact that he couldn’t do that was really unfortunate.

“Cough!”

Caterina was also watching the game with nervous eyes. She had to do something, but it was a situation where her head would be blown away if she did anything wrong.

“.....”

There was a sniper rifle outside the door, so what could she do?

“...It is my mistake.”

Why didn't she notice such a simple trick? The subordinates she brought were waiting outside the building. The rule was that only the boss and their lieutenant could enter. Finally, a weapon couldn't be brought into the casino.

This applied to all teams. At first glance, it seemed to be a rule that aimed for competing in pure skills rather than force. But in reality, there were gaps in the conditions that would lead to foul play.

If she had been thinking calmly, then she would've read Li Zheng's intentions when he wanted to send out their lieutenants. However, Caterina and Yamaguchi had gotten carried away with their winning strategies. Thus, they didn't think of the simple method of 'threatening the opponent with a gun.'

"A mafia boss shouldn't use such a lowly trick."

Caterina glared at the man aiming the gun from outside the door. He fired a bullet and destroyed a table. If Caterina didn't follow Li Zheng's words, then she would end up like that.

"Kuohh, huhuhu... I won."

Li Zheng swept up the chips with a cheerful expression. Caterina asked with a humiliated look.

"Can you finish it quickly? Yes. You won."

A laser pointer was aimed at her head while playing the game. It was a horrible feeling.

Li Zheng smiled.

“I’d love to, but I can only bet a few chips at once. Still, if it continues like this then I can become first within the time limit. Oh, Girlie. You seem quite good at calculating in your head. Calculate how long it will be until I want a drink.”

Li Zheng smiled at Caterina with a relaxed expression. There was nothing she could do.

“Don’t blame me too much. I just brought the most useful subordinate.”

An emotionless dealer gave a card to Yamaguchi and Li Zheng. Thanks to the incense, the dealers would follow Yamaguchi’s orders. However, it was impossible for the dealers to overpower the opponents armed with guns.

“Oh, what a shame. You picked a 10. Will you forfeit straight away? You can save some time.”

“C-Cough!”

Yamaguchi narrowed his eyes and coughed. But the Yakuza boss, who had thousands of subordinates, was just a weak old man. He would be lucky if he didn’t lose his life. However, being deprived of

Phantom was a very painful thing. The initiative of being active in South Korea would be passed to the opponent. In particular, the Yakuza still had something to do in South Korea so they absolutely wanted to prevent another organization from obtaining it.

“Ah, yes. There was that number.”

Yamaguchi closed his eyes and tried to come up with a plausible plan. There was a saying in Japan about turning over the table. It would happen when there was an unpleasant situation. Overturn the table itself.

More than this...

Li Zheng grabbed the chips again and said,

“There are a lot of complaints because I keep winning. Sorry. Then let’s replace the players. Next, I should obtain some chips from the girl.”

“.....”

Caterina swapped places with Yamaguchi silently. Up to this point, it seemed like the fight over Phantom would end with Li Zheng’s complete victory.

---

Tae-hyuk waited for the perfect timing.

The bosses who participated in the mafia game didn't notice the most important condition. It was decided with mutual agreement that the game would take place in three rounds. Regardless of the middle ranking, the person with the most chips at the end would get Phantom.

So what would happen if the game ended and all of the mafias had the same amount of money? The answer was that nothing would change. Phantom would continue to operate freely without belonging anywhere. The mafia would have a subtle war of nerves in South Korea.

It was the mafia game itself that Tae-hyuk was aiming for.

“Everybody has prepared one winning strategy for the mafia game. It is the same with me as well.”

The third round was reaching its end. Right now, the mafia's money was perfectly tied at 1.43 billion won. And there was a 10 million won chip on the table. The winner of this round would be Phantom's owner.

“I guess I have to go.”

Tae-hyuk put on the opera mask and headed to the casino.

“P-Phantom?”

“C-Cough.”

“Oh, have you come to celebrate my victory?”

Li Zheng laughed as he played the last game at the table.

“Now we are on the same side. Despite the past, we should get along now! There is still something I want from Phantom.”

Of course, Li Zheng would dispose of Phantom after a year or so. Before that, he wanted to know the secret of Phantom’s abilities. While hiding such darkness, Li Zheng welcomed Phantom with a smile.

Tae-hyuk approached the table and asked,

“But didn’t you notice one strange thing?”

“Strange?”

“Why is everyone in here, except for you, wearing a mask?”

“T-That is because they are your fellow Phantoms.”

“That is a preconceived notion. Why didn’t a person with a similar victory strategy notice it?”

“D-Don’t tell me...!”

Tae-hyuk pulled out a plastic sheet folded under the opera mask. After some manipulation, it became a good gas mask. Phantom wasn’t using a plain mask.

“Now, do you all understand?”

Tae-hyuk sent a signal and the cameramen all turned their masks into gas masks. The spellbound dealers just stared into the air blankly.

“D-Damn! Phantom deceived us!”

“You should always be aware of the situation. Gas! Gas! Gas!”

At Tae-hyuk’s orders, the cameramen took something out. Gray smoke poured out from it.

“Phantom...!”

Li Zheng tried to escape the smoke but couldn’t because it happened so quickly.

“Now have a good sleep. Everything will have ended once you wake up.”



“G-Greenhorn...”

“Phantom... W-Why...”

Yamaguchi and Caterina stared at Phantom with confused eyes. However, it didn't last long. The powerful sleeping gas put them to sleep in an instant.

“.....”

“.....”

“.....”

Li Zheng was fast asleep without being able to protest the unfairness of the situation. Tae-hyuk placed the remaining red chip on the table into his pocket and muttered.

“After the game is over, the chip left on the table is a tip right? There is still a little bit until the end. It will be tough to break them before that, so I will use the tip well.”

Li Zheng, Yamaguchi and Caterina all had 1.43 billion won in chips. However, there were still 10 minutes until the mafia game finished.

“Ah, yes. Shall I play doctor while I am bored waiting?”

Phantom brought out a surgical tool. Tae-hyuk alternated between looking at it and at the mafia bosses collapsed on the ground. Then he laughed like a criminal.

“...Illegal Surgery. Start.”

---

“Ugh...”

“This place...”

“...P-Phantom!”

As the sleeping gas wore off, the participants of the mafia game woke up. They were lying on top of chairs that had been brought from somewhere. Tae-hyuk spoke from where he was organizing his surgical tools.

“Everyone was tired from playing games all night so you slept like logs. But what should I do? The game time ran out while you were sleeping.”

“Y-Y-You put us to sleep with a gas!”

Tae-hyuk smiled gently at Li Zheng.

“Can you say that?”

It was a reminder that he had threatened the other bosses with guns just two hours ago. He never thought he would be the one tricked. Li Zheng's anger boiled up.

“Then let's do the final closing. The Triad has 1.43 billion.”

“Damn!”

“The Yakuza has 1.43 billion.”

“K-Kuhuk!”

“The Red Mafia has 1.43 billion.”

“.....”

Tae-hyuk declared proudly.

“Unbelievable! Coincidentally, all three teams have tied. The game is null and void.”

Yamaguchi and Li Zheng dropped their heads after realizing they had lost the game. They never thought that at the last minute...

At that moment, Caterina quietly said,

“N-No Phantom. The game can’t end in a tie. Clearly, the total betting amount is 4.3 billion. Once divided between teams, there should be 10 million won left.”

“Oh, that 10 million won? The chip left at the table is the dealer’s tip. I am grateful for it.”

Caterina had the most desire for Phantom among the three people so she stuck to it until the end.

“Isn’t that just the case in a regular casino? Obviously there wasn’t such a rule in the rules that you gave us.”

“Hrmm, that’s right.”

Certainly.

Yamaguchi and Li Zheng also added.

“Yes. The game isn’t over.”

“I also agree.”

Caterina glared at Li Zheng for interrupting. He had tried to kill her so why was he suddenly pretending to be friends?

However, the game wasn’t finished yet. Tae-hyuk licked his lips

and nodded.

“Then let’s start the fourth round of the mafia game. There will just be one difference.”

“W-What?”

“Me too.”

“A-Aren’t you the master of the casino? If you want, then you can increase your chips as you like. It is unfair!”

“You don’t have to worry about increasing the chips.”

“What does that mean?”

“I mean, I’m going to win with this one chip.”

Tae-hyuk raised the 10 million won chip.

“The rules of the 4th round are simple. If you make me broke, then you win.”

“P-Playing with just one chip? T-That is ridiculous! Bluff Poker is an overwhelmingly advantageous game when there are a lot of chips!”

“If you want then I can fight all three people at the same time. Bring it on.”

Phantom’s declaration of war caused the fighting spirits of the participants to burn.

“I haven’t given up yet Phantom.”

“Huhu, this will be fun.”

“I-I am going to win.”

The bosses had a total of 429 chips. Phantom had only one!

With this ridiculous difference, the last Bluff Poker of the mafia game began.

# Chapter 149 – Phantom's Counterattack #4

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A match against Phantom!

The first one to challenge Phantom was Yamaguchi Takeshi. Although the opponent's abilities were fearsome, the number of chips played a huge role in Bluff Poker.

1 VS 143. It was such a huge difference that normally it wouldn't even be a game. The basic bet of Bluff Poker started at 10 million won. It was like one person fighting against an army.

Yamaguchi watched the other bosses. Li Zheng still hadn't escaped from the confusion of Phantom's entry. Caterina bowed her head in silence.

The one who held the larger number of chips would surely kill the opponent. This was a great opportunity for Yamaguchi. The game would end once he snatched Phantom's single chip. Of course, if he succeeded first then the others wouldn't even be qualified to challenge.

"I will take the position of the vanguard."

Tae-hyuk, who was wearing dealer's clothes, sat in a chair and smiled.

"Um, the dealers aren't in good shape so shall we play Bluff Poker by pulling cards one by one from the pile?"

Yamaguchi stroked his beard and said,

“Won’t you be able to cheat?”

“Then we will pull out a card for each other.”

“Hmm...then okay. I don’t like it but it can’t be helped.”

“I also want to add one condition.”

“What is it?”

“As you know, I might have to fight two more people in the future. Let’s not get caught up in things like betting and bluffing.”

“Maybe I’ll end it on my turn... well, do whatever you want.”

Tae-hyuk raised a partition and made a space for only two people around the table.

“No one else can interfere in this game.”

Yamaguchi nodded to signal that he was fine with it. Thus, Yamaguchi and Phantom’s Bluff Poker game began.



Yamaguchi had 143 chips worth 10 million won stacked in front of him. Phantom only had one chip.

Yamaguchi asked,

“If you don’t do the basic bet then you can’t die right? Is it really okay?”

“I will keep my promise. Don’t worry.”

“Huhu...then it is my turn.”

Yamaguchi mixed 20 cards and put them on the table. Tae-hyuk shuffled them once more and placed it in the pile. Everything was ready for the game.

“I’ll go first.”

“Pull it out very slowly.”

“You seem to be uneasy.”

“There are many card sharks with hands that are faster than the eyes these days.”

Tae-hyuk grinned as he pulled out a card and laid it in front of Yamaguchi. Yamaguchi stared intently but couldn’t find any signs

of a trick.

“Then it is my turn.”

All the preparations were finished and it was time for the cards to be opened.

Yamaguchi looked at Phantom’s hand.

A 6. It was a moderately high number, but the opponent also had a chance of defeat.

“But isn’t wearing a mask too unfair? This is called Bluff Poker.”

“I’ll take it off.”

Phantom pulled the opera mask off his face. Underneath the mask was Yamaguchi’s face.

“.....!”

He knew Phantom had this ability, but it was more amazing seeing it in person.

“Isn’t it better to have the same conditions?”

However, it didn’t need to be his face! Yamaguchi barely

managed to refrain from shouting.

“Then let’s place the bets. I can only play the basic bet so I will bet 10 million.”

“Yes.”

Yamaguchi pulled the card down from his forehead.

A 5. It was only one lower than Phantom.

“C-Cough. How lucky.”

“Then let’s do it quickly.”

The approach was the same. Draw a card, place it in front of the opponent, place it on the forehead, then bet. Phantom bet 20 million won. The preparations ended in an instant. The result was that Yamaguchi had a 2 and Phantom had a 3.

“Hrmm...!”

The difference wasn’t large, so Yamaguchi’s face darkened. But it was still okay.

No matter how ghostly he was, luck in gambling didn’t last. If Phantom lost once then it would be a fatal blow to him.

“Then, let’s go to the next round.”

“Do it.”

Phantom continued to go all-in. It was like a swordsman approaching death. It was literally fighting for their lives. If he didn’t kill the opponent then he would die.

20 million to 40 million... 80 million to 160 million...

Phantom’s chips continued to grow. In the end, Yamaguchi exploded.

A 2 card was attached to Phantom’s forehead. If it was the same pattern as before then Yamaguchi would have a 1.

“T-This is ridiculous! How does this keep continuing... It doesn’t make sense...”

“It is a coincidence. I am just a little more lucky than you.”

“K-Kuhuk!”

In the end, Yamaguchi had to give up his strategy of making Phantom go all-in. No, if this continued then he would lose. In that case, it was better to slowly adjust the betting.

Tae-hyuk shamelessly said,

“Let’s finish it all at once.”

Tae-hyuk pushed all his chips into the middle of the table. If Yamaguchi didn’t bet the same amount then he lose the round.

“This! First I will watch the situation. I give up this round. Anyway, the card on my head is a...”

Of course it would be a 1, so Yamaguchi forfeited and threw the card on the table. Then he opened his eyes and groaned.

“...H-Heok!” What? This!”

There was a card with a 10 on it, like it was making fun of Yamaguchi.

“Don’t you know that if you die with a 10, you have to pay double the bet? My apologies, but this is just the basics.”

“Y-You did all-in on a 10? If I accepted...”

“It would’ve been your victory.”

Yamaguchi had continued to score one below Phantom in several

rounds. Phantom continued to declare all-in and won. Yamaguchi thought the result would be the same if he declared all-in this time.

But what was this? A 10?

“H-How the hell...? P-Phantom. Your luck...”

Yamaguchi muttered with a dark expression. Thus, Yamaguchi’s fighting spirit disappeared. All that was left was to take the remaining money. Tae-hyuk looked at Yamaguchi with a satisfied expression and said,

“Now, let’s continue with the next hand.”

“Aaaagh, ahhhhhhh!”

.....

Within 10 minutes, Tae-hyuk had 1.44 billion won worth of chips. Now Phantom was the one who had the most chips here.

---

Tae-hyuk clicked his tongue as he saw Yamaguchi staring blankly up at the sky.

“In fact, you had a way to win.”

One person would intentionally lose 10 million won to Phantom. And another person would do the same thing. If all three people had 1.43 billion won, two people would now be reduced to 1.42 billion won. As a result, Phantom would become the property of the remaining person.

“In the end, no one wanted to make the sacrifice. Thus, nobody could get their hands on Phantom.”

“.....”

The Red Mafia and Triads bosses still remained but the results wouldn't change. They gave up their only chance of victory.

Tae-hyuk was able to change the card he pulled from the pile into whatever he wanted thanks to Counterfeit. As soon as he pulled a card, he naturally touched the next one. Thus, he used Counterfeit to change two cards at the same time.

Card counting? Controlling the dealer? Threatening with a gun?

None of that could beat Phantom, who could freely decide the numbers.

Yamaguchi was completely soulless. In the end, Mister Park, who was waiting in the hallway, had to come and help him.

“Next up are the Triads.”

“Bah. I won’t be as easy to beat.”

“Really?”

20 minutes was enough time to beat Li Zheng.

“...H-H-Heok!”

“B-Boss!”

“Now, it is Caterina’s turn.”

“.....”

Caterina bit her lip and asked,

“D-Do you dislike me so much?”

Tae-hyuk stroked her hair and smiled,

“No way, that is impossible. Anne is someone who needs to do something very important.”

“Huh?”



“Let’s finish the game here. I have two things to offer Anne. Do you want to hear it?”

“Offer?”

“Yes. If you give up the game here, then Anne will be able to obtain two benefits. You will lose to Phantom, but you will be ahead in points against the other bosses. I think that is enough to show the qualities of a boss.”

“That is nonsense! That isn’t enough to get the recognition of the other bosses.”

“And after you give up, I will be the winner of this mafia game. What if such a person helps you?”

“.....”

“Of course, I will refuse the position of head of the Korean branch. However, I will help you become the boss. Of course, you will have to return the chips to me.”

Tae-hyuk didn’t forget that his opponent still had 1.43 billion won worth of chips.

“Y-You will really do that?”

Caterina asked tearfully.

“Yes. You have been added to my precious balance.”

“PPrecious...”

Caterina’s face reddened. But this wasn’t the end. Tae-hyuk brought his mouth close to Caterina’s ears and whispered,

“Well, the happy story ends here. Do you accept the offer?”

“...Of course, Phantom. Such conditions are welcome. I-I really appreciate you helping me.”

After finishing the story, Tae-hyuk went out and declared victory to the other bosses.

“The Red Mafia boss has given up the game. With this, I will announce the revenue of each team. I have 2.87 billion won. The Red Mafia has 1.43 billion won. Then the remaining two teams...”

Yamaguchi raised his body and said,

“Stop. It is our defeat. But why did you call us here if it was to end this way? You could’ve just met Girlie alone.”

Tae-hyuk replied with a smile.

“Ah, that? I will explain that now.”

He pressed a button and a monitor descended from the ceiling.

“It seems like you want to show us something.”

“Correct. Most of the cameras were used to hide the sleeping gas but there was a real one mixed in. This was taken.”

“C-Cough.”

Yamaguchi coughed and looked at the monitor. Then something strange appeared. Phantom was putting something in Yamaguchi’s chest.

“.....!!!”

“W-what is going on?”

Caterina shrieked as she saw the surgical scene without any mosaics.

“Kyaaaack!”

Tae-hyuk patted her head and said,

“Don’t worry. I didn’t leave any scars.”

“W-What did you do to my body?”

“Illegal Surgery. I did the same to the other people so Grandfather, don’t be too sick.”

Li Zheng and Caterina’s faces turned pale.

“Now, the next scene.”

Tae-hyuk flicked his fingers and Li Zheng and Caterina appeared in turn. Caterina’s white breasts were exposed but she couldn’t afford to feel ashamed.

“W-What? What did you put in?”

“Bomb.”

“B-Bomb?!”

“...Bomb? P-Please give a proper explanation!”

Li Zheng and Caterina tried to reach Phantom.

“The video isn’t over yet. Then I will let you know the power of the bomb.”

Once again, the screen changed. This time, the same thing that was placed in the chest of the bosses was installed in the front seat of a car. Tae-hyuk pressed a switch and the car exploded.

“Whoa. It is hot just looking at it.”

“I-In my chest...”

“If you try to get it out with surgery then it will explode, so be careful.”

“H-How the hell did you put it in?”

“Very precisely. Oh, I also put it in the bodies of your lieutenants so you can share your sorrow.”

“.....”

Tae-hyuk slowly walked to the centre of the casino. It was the place where the huge monitor was installed. Then he spoke like he was a noble.

“Here we have the detonation switch. If I press it, then the boss and lieutenants will die at the same time.”

“This isn’t helping!”

“I would rather die than become your subordinate! Anyway, there are numerous candidates in the Triads. Any one of them can replace me...”

Tae-hyuk shook his head at Li Zheng’s violent reaction.

“You guys are just the messengers. What am I going to do with these detonators?”

They were shaped like a small fountain pen. Tae-hyuk gave out three of them to the bosses.

“From now on, you are holding the lives of the different bosses and their lieutenants in your hand. Can you fight against each other then?”

Yamaguchi looked at the detonator in his palm and muttered,

“T-The bombs will explode if I press this?”

“Yes. Be careful. There will be a real bang!”

Li Zheng’s face paled even further. Yamaguchi and Caterina could kill him anytime they liked.

“Then this is the last game. Who will be the first to push the detonator? Of course, the deadline is...”

“W-Who would do anything so dangerous...?!”

Tae-hyuk spread his arms open and declared,

“Forever!”

The bosses were confused. They couldn't press it because they didn't know whose detonator they had. Still, they were aware that their lives were in their opponents' hands.

“Thus, the mafia will need to get along during this game.”

“.....!”

Caterina quickly noticed Phantom's purpose.

He wanted the Red Mafia, Triads and Yakuza to keep each other in check. Therefore, the bosses wouldn't be able to fight a war against each other in South Korea. Of course, peace wouldn't be sustained forever. But as long as the people here existed as bosses, they couldn't move carelessly, making it like there was a truce.

“...It took only one night to shackle the mafia's necks.”

Caterina touched her chest which contained the bomb installed by Phantom.

Her heart beat quickly. Even though she was treated like this, her love didn't diminish.

---

“Ohu... Kuhuhuhu... Uhahahaha!”

Tae-hyuk laughed crazily as the people left and he was alone. Tae-hyuk installed bombs in the hearts of the participants of the mafia game and then returned the switches to their original owners.

“But they can't press it unless they know who it belongs to! They might die themselves!”

If a boss touched the switch to kill another boss, the bomb in their chest would explode. Who would be the first one to blow themselves up?

The one certain thing was that the Red Mafia, the Triads and the Yakuza wouldn't be able to fight each other or touch Korea for now. With this, the cats were collared.

“The mafia game ends with my victory! They can't touch South Korea anymore. The police are already not my opponents! Now, come. I showed the quality of a king. Hahaha! Yes, from now on I am...”

Tae-hyuk took the phantom mask from his pocket and placed it on his face. The excitement heated up his head. Finally, Tae-hyuk



shouted something.

“....A king!”

[You have won the mafia game.]

[Do you want to upgrade to a King status?]

– Y/N

# Chapter 150 – Time To Clean Up #1

---

Tae-hyuk suddenly recalled his previous life, where he was wrongfully imprisoned for murder. He spent 10 years in prison until he lost his life. During that time, he met countless criminals.

Strangely, many of them said something like this.

–Why did I do that? I don't know! My body spontaneously moved... I mean, do you understand? The bad thing is the crime, not me. I'm a victim as well.

Tae-hyuk had laughed as he listened to that. It sounded like the crime was in control instead.

However, what they were saying might have been real. Since a while ago, he started to think that.

---

“...Tae-hyuk! Seo Tae-hyuk!”

“Uh, um? Ha-ran noona?”

When he opened his eyes, Seo Ha-ran was dressed in a smart suit with her fist raised. If he didn't get up right now then he would be hit.

“Your teacher is waiting. We should go in.”

“Eh? It is already time?”

“This child. You have been dozing off since earlier.”

Tae-hyuk scratched his head.

He had been checking the Demon Revealing Mirror as he was waiting for his meeting with the teacher. His crime skills had renewed after he upgraded his status to ‘King’.

The first thing that caught his eyes was Disguise. Once he triggered it, he could change his face and voice to someone else’s. However, his body stayed the same.

‘Disguise’ had evolved into ‘Transformation.’

‘Now I can change the body as well.’

To test it out, he took a shower and transformed into Moonlight Flower, almost giving himself a nosebleed. His face turned hot as he recalled that memory.

‘...A really terrific skill!’

In addition, Illegal Surgery changed to Body Modification. It

seemed to be strengthened towards the direction that he used the skill. Now he could easily swap arms and legs, or plant bombs inside the body.

In addition, most of the skills gained additional attributes. However, Violence maintained its original shape.

‘Of course, thanks to Sixth Sense and other attributes, I am able to use it a lot more than when I first got it.’

After becoming the winner of the mafia game, Tae-hyuk was promoted from a Noble to a King. Now he could do things that were impossible when he was just a Noble. He wanted to test his newly acquired abilities right now. However, there was no one in the area.

‘Let’s see... Are there any survivors from the Triads? Ah, maybe I should rob a bank?’

If he used ‘Transformation’, then he could do it without getting any blood on his hands. The mafia, who had been the biggest obstacle to his activities in South Korea, had now been dealt with. Now there was nothing left to block his way...

“What are you doing? Tae-hyuk, let’s go.”

“Umm.”

Ha-ran grabbed Tae-hyuk’s hand and led him to the consultation

room. The parent and student before them were just leaving the room. The mother was dressed in various luxurious products, looking like a decorated peacock. The peacock rolled her eyes as she saw Ha-ran and muttered,

“Why did a child come to a parent meeting? Don’t they have parents?”

She was talking to herself but her words easily reached Tae-hyuk’s ears. Ha-ran was smiling with a casual expression, but her eyes shook for a moment.

The peacock’s eyes widened as she saw Tae-hyuk following after Ha-ran.

“Omo! He completely looks like a gangster! Why is his expression so terrible? Chan-shik, you should absolutely never become friends with him.”

“M-Mother...”

It sounded like she intended to speak to her son but once again, her voice was too loud. Tae-hyuk’s eyes narrowed as he watched Ha-ran’s expression darken. What was she feeling now? Anger rose as he thought about it.

‘Well. Should I just kill her?’

He had a gun... He touched the grip of the hidden pistol. Bullets

were loaded so pulling the trigger would fire it. The opponents were just an ordinary high school student and his mother. Tae-hyuk didn't need to use Bullet Time to put a hole in their heads. If he raised the gun, then the peacock would tremble with fear...

‘No. I didn’t place a silencer on the pistol and too many people are watching. In that case, I can be a little bit playful.’

The peacock couldn't imagine how close she came to dying. He glared at the peacock with a cold expression.

“Mother! He is Seo Tae-hyuk.”

“Seo Tae-hyuk? A fighter?”

“It’s not like that... he was ranked 300th on the mock exams.”

The peacock laughed.

“300th? That is almost at the bottom of the school. Indeed, as I said...”

“300th in the nation!”

“.....”

It was a number that was only possible if a person could close to a

perfect score in the mock exams. There were literally hundreds of thousands of examinees. The level was enough to get a full scholarship to S University.

Hearing those words, the expression on the peacock's face changed. She covered her mouth with her hand and walked towards Tae-hyuk.

“Omo, you are Tae-hyuk. I've heard a lot about you. Would you like to have dinner together after your meeting? I have a reservation at a ribs restaurant. I get the sense that we will become friendly in the future...”

Tae-hyuk smiled and said,

“Ajumma. I'm sorry but aren't your clothes going to burst?”

“W-What?”

“All the suit buttons...”

“Aaack!”

The buttons on the clothes that the peacock was wearing were all gone. It was a situation where it wouldn't be weird for her clothes to fall off at any second. The peacock grabbed her son's hand and ran away from the consultation room.

‘You should be grateful that I only did this much.’

Tae-hyuk quickly put the buttons into his pocket.

Jung Nam-ho didn’t seem very upset at the aftermath of the peacock storming out. He had been teaching high school students for over 10 years already. He was familiar with the nerves parents had when their children were third years.

“Hey! Tae-hyuk! Come in and sit down!”

Tae-hyuk and Ha-ran sat down and the consultation began. Ha-ran bowed politely and greeted the teacher.

“Hello. I am Tae-hyuk’s sister.”

“C-Cough! Ah, his sister? Seo Tae-hyuk... Seo Tae-hyuk is my most beloved disciple. Have you seen the report card with his results from the mock exams?”

“...Yes.”

“Then let’s see...”

Jung Nam-ho pulled out a table universities’ cut-off lines and told Tae-hyuk which ones he could go to. His list included all of the top universities.



“All of these universities will offer a full scholarship if Tae-hyuk chooses to go there. If he tells me which university he wants to go to, then I will give him my full support.”

Universities with a slightly lower cut-off line than S University were checked.

Most career counseling was based on the student's grades. Therefore, it was often a one-sided conversation. However, Jung Nam-ho didn't forcibly talk and instead listened to Ha-ran calmly.

“First of all, I would like to send Tae-hyuk to the university he wants to go, regardless of scholarships.”

“Ah, is that so?”

The two of them focused on Seo Tae-hyuk.

“Well. I don't care if it is S University.”

“S University...the medical school might be hard, but you will be able to easily enter the other courses.”

“R-Really? S-Sob...!”

Ha-ran's eyes reddened and thick tears started to flow down her face.

“S-Sob, s... I-I’m sorry. I just didn’t know that Tae-hyuk would be doing so well... Our parents died in an accident and raising him alone...”

Of course, she had seen the report cards from school. However, hearing it directly from the mouth of a teacher was different. It felt like something from a dream.

“Ah, the tears have broken out...”

Tae-hyuk grunted and quietly pulled out a handkerchief from his pocket.

---

“I’m sorry. Crying all of a sudden...”

“Well, it doesn’t matter.”

In the end, Tae-hyuk’s path was to study to enter S University. It was due to a promise to go to the same university as An Eun-young. He just meant to keep it.

‘In the future...’

It had been one year since he first received memories of the future. Could he get a scholarship to go to university? It was something he wouldn’t have imagined in his previous life.

“Tae-hyuk, let’s go eat meat!”

Ha-ran suddenly smiled and tugged at Tae-hyuk’s arms.

“I would rather go home and eat Noona’s cooking.”

“It has been a long time since we went out together like this. Let’s eat something delicious! Besides, you can go to such a good university! Congratulations!”

“Aigoo... I haven’t been accepted yet. You are completely excited over a career consultation.”

“Hehe!”

Ha-ran laughed brightly in her clean suit. Her tired appearance from his previous life seemed to overlap with her current form.

Tae-hyuk didn’t want to see that again. He suddenly felt anxious and decided to ask her something,

“By the way, what is Noona thinking of studying at university?”

Ha-ran spun around and spoke. She looked so refreshing and lively.

“I’m thinking about it. I think I want to go to a university with an energy research institute.”

“Energy research institute?”

“Yes. A place to study eco-friendly energy... I happen to know the department manager there so I think I can enter with his recommendation.”

Ha-ran’s eyes shone as she talked about the research institute. Tae-hyuk decided to figure out what type of place it was at the next opportunity.

“Do you remember when we lived in the basement room in the past? It was too cold in winter, so we would hug each other in order to sleep. If the research is a success, it can supply energy that is dozens of times cheaper than the current fuels we use. Then won’t everyone be able to stay warm in winter? And the children at the orphanage...”

He wondered how long she had been dreaming of this to be talking about it so excitedly. If there was such a new energy, then the person who discovered it would instantly receive the Nobel Prize.

However, Tae-hyuk didn’t want to break Ha-ran’s dream. Ha-ran had decided what she wanted to do, unless her previous life that was stained in despair. That was too much...

“I hope it turns out well.”

“Is that so?”

---

After taking Ha-ran home, Tae-hyuk hid in a dark alley.

“Now, let’s try this out.”

Once he exited, he was a completely different person. Tae-hyuk looked down at his body. The power of the ‘Transformation’ skill was enough to make his mouth drop open. Not just his face and voice, but his body was also perfectly transformed into another person. Now he could hide anywhere without the Phantom mask.

“Well, the place where I’m going now isn’t easy.”

Tae-hyuk had allied with the Bomber for the mafia game. Now it was time to keep his promise.

“In order to do that, I need to get rid of the remnants of the Yakuza still remaining in South Korea.”

Yamaguchi Takeshi had gone back to Japan, leaving Mister Park behind to repair his remaining forces. He had to wipe them out as well as destroy Taesung Group’s laboratories. Getting revenge on those who drove the Bomber’s family to ruin was Tae-hyuk’s promise.

“There is no need to hurry. Still, it is something that needs to be done.”

Tae-hyuk laughed as he pressed the call button on his phone.

## Chapter 151 – Time To Clean Up #2

---

“Bomber, you have worked hard in the meantime. Now I will do as I promised.”

The Bomber didn't say anything for a while. He wanted to take direct revenge on the Taesung Group, who drove his family to their deaths.

-....At first, I thought they would be judged if I revealed what they did. However, I was mistaken.

At first, there were a lot of people who blamed the Taesung Group for concealing the events that occurred at their laboratory. On the Internet, a boycott against products made by the Taesung Group were launched. The stock prices fell everyday, leading to losses of billions of won.

The person who was responsible was arrested and everything seemed to be going as the Bomber planned. However, the Bomber was unaware of how much the big corporations dominated the Korean system.

“Yes. One researcher committed suicide and claimed all responsibility. It fizzled out.”

The Bomber said,

-In less than 10 minutes, the headlines were filled with

entertainment scandals. I didn't think that such a large incident could be buried so easily.

“That is possible in South Korea.”

-Huhu...is that so? That is why we have to do such things in South Korea.

He heard a clicking sound over the receiver. Was the Bomber touching his bombs?

The Bomber acted as if his emotions had been removed ever since he escaped from prison. It was only when he talked about the Taesung Group that he felt like a living human. He was literally a bomb that lived for destroying his target.

“First of all, I wanted to make sure of something.”

-...What is it?

“What is the revenge you want?”

It was a question that implied various things. It was simple if he just wanted revenge on the one who killed his family. Tae-hyuk just needed to find the person who injected them directly with the virus.

However, the Bomber wouldn't be satisfied with just that. The



target of the Bomber was the Taesung Group itself that ran the research institutes.

–First of all...I want to know who ordered the experiment on my wife and daughter.

“That isn’t hard.”

–I also want to smash the Taesung Group, the group that made it possible.

“That isn’t hard either.”

The Bomber’s voice started shaking,

–Is it possible? No matter how great you are, Phantom will need to fight a big corporation by yourself.

“Huhu, don’t worry about it. I will fulfill my promise.”

He wanted to try the abilities that he had gained after upgraded himself to a King. It was good for him as well.

-Yes, I understand.

Tae-hyuk instructed the Bomber to prepare for the fight against the research institutes.

---

If he watched any TV program then he would see advertisements from the Taesung Group. The influence of the Taesung Group on the mass media was amazing.

“In the end, one or two people dying doesn’t matter.”

Tae-hyuk recalled the chairman of the Taesung Group, Song Won-jin.

Tae-hyuk first saw him in the Death Circus. He sat in the best seat with a lion mask on his face. After that, the Bomber incident happened and he went through questioning before returning to the Taesung Group.

Tae-hyuk had clicked his tongue at the news.

“The Taesung research institute event is kind of understandable. But how did he get out of the Death Circus case? It is impossible unless he has connections with the prosecutors...”

He knew that the Yakuza’s support was behind the Taesung Group.

“...Wait a minute. This means...”

Tae-hyuk combined his future knowledge and the information he had obtained as Phantom. He was able to come up with a shocking fact.

“The hands of the Yakuza might’ve reached the prosecutors as well. It is a high-ranking person.”

If he investigated then more details would emerge. If so, he knew what had to be done from now on.

First of all, gather information. The goal was the Taesung Institute of Physics and Chemistry. It was one of the few natural sciences institutes in South Korea. Physics, engineering, chemistry, computational science, biology and medical science were closely studied there. Originally, it was inside the Taesung Research Complex, but it was moved after the incident.

“Yes, I should go into the lion’s den to catch the lion.”

Tae-hyuk licked his lips. It wasn’t a place he could easily enter. Just like fighting against the mafia, it was impossible to shatter all of the research institutes belonging to the Taesung Group. He had only been able to drive the mafia away from South Korea.

“If I roam around the lair as a fox, then I can escape the lion.”

Eh? If it was a lion then he knew someone similar. Tae-hyuk suddenly came up with a very good plan before heading to Taesung Chemical’s headquarters.

Unlike the institute, it was easy to reach by taxi. He headed to a nearby restroom and pulled out the Demon Revealing Mirror.

‘Then shall I test the power of Transformation?’

It was the new skill he learnt after upgrading to a King.

‘The spy shouldn’t be a good-looking woman.’

He ended up becoming a new reporter who was in her early 20s. She had bright blonde hair that was cut short, and makeup that felt unfamiliar. The clothes she wore were the same, so the leather jacket was baggy.

“Ah, I forgot to change clothes. Ahaha...”

His voice was perfectly changed into a woman’s, so there was no need to use Voice Modulation separately. He used Counterfeit to change his leather jacket and jeans into a neat ladies’ suit. The pass around his neck allowed him access to large companies.

Tae-hyuk looked in the mirror and tried to make an expression that was as innocent as possible. He didn’t know where to go but he decided to try it first.

---

Like all large companies, the entire high-rise building was the headquarters of Taesung Chemicals. Once he opened the door and approached the desk, the receptionist bowed politely and greeted him.

“Hello? What can I help you with today?”

“Ah! I-Is it 2 o’clock right now?”

“Yes, that’s right.”

“I-I’m glad. Today I have an interview with an executive... However, I mistook the time so I left late and had to hurry...”

“I-Is that so? You went through a lot of trouble.”

Tae-hyuk purposely made his hair disheveled and clothes messy. He perfectly looked like a person who was in a hurry because they were running late.

The receptionist said with a soft smile,

“I’m sorry, but could you please show me your pass?”

Tae-hyuk raised the pass hanging around his neck. On it was the name of a person who frequently wrote articles on Taesung Chemicals. He was able to register her appearance on the Demon Revealing Mirror. It was literally a bounteous tree.

“It is verified. Have you come here before? You have an ID registered.”

“I-It looks like I did...”

“Who did you come to see? Did you make an appointment in advance?”

Tae-hyuk made the most pathetic expression he could and said,

“T-That...S-Sunbae...”

“Don’t panic. Can you tell me who it was?”

The receptionist looked at the new reporter with sympathy. How was she supposed to interview someone like this? She was reminded of her new employee days.

Yes...!

Although they weren’t in the same field, she decided to be kind to the rookie.

“A-An interview with C-Chairman Song Won-jin...”

“With the boss?! T-that is impossible.”

The receptionist's eyes widened. That interview was too big to be done by a new reporter. Even she had never seen the boss before.

“Yes... That is right...”

“T-Then I'll call his secretary and check it.”

“T-Thank you.”

The receptionist was troubled for a moment.

Taesung Chemicals' chairman, Song Won-jin, was lying low since being involved in a scandal. The only ones who dealt with him were a few direct subordinates. Naturally, most interview requests were rejected, yet a woman who was a new reporter was looking for the chairman.

The receptionist would've sent her away directly, but that seemed too harsh. It would be turned down, but wouldn't it be nice to show that an attempt was made? The reception pressed the intercom to the secretary then spoke in a small voice.

“Chief Soo-hee. Perhaps...an interview...”

Then a loud sound was heard over the receiver.

-What? I told you not to contact me regarding anything like that!

And a new journalist? Send them back to the station!

“Yes... I-I’m sorry.”

–I’m hanging up. In addition, I will contact HR about this so reflect on your actions.

“.....”

This was the most that the receptionist could do.

“I’m sorry. The chairman isn’t seeing anyone right now.”

“D-Did you get into trouble because of me?”

“Did you hear? Ahaha! It is okay. It is originally like this.”

Tae-hyuk’s eyes flashed as he gazed at the receptionist. He had deliberately picked someone who was kind and gentle. She acted as he expected. Tae-hyuk left the place after completing his conversation with the friendly receptionist.

‘This is the best way to gain information.’

He pretended to be a new journalist so people were vigilant against him. He never expected to meet Chairman Song Won-jin in the first place. This was good enough.



‘I never thought it would be easy to see Chairman Song Won-jin.’

Tae-hyuk immediately triggered the Spying skill after he started talking to the receptionist. After upgrading to a King, he was able to get much more detailed information from Spying.

‘For example, where the receiver is connected to.’

He could trace calls without using any equipment. When he was a Noble, skills could be raised by consuming affinity points or satisfying certain conditions. However, when he upgraded to a King, the level of all of his crime skills had risen.

In addition, Tae-hyuk’s psychological state became more like a psychopathic criminal. But a little thing like that didn’t matter right now.

‘The place where the voice is coming from is the 7th floor of this building. I now know the whereabouts of Chairman Song Won-jin.’

He took the elevator while pretending to go to the bathroom. However, he pushed the button to the 6th floor.

“That floor seems to be VIPs only.”

He used ‘Spying’ and ‘Forgery’. A blueprint of the whole building

appeared before him. There was a red dot indicating the room where the secretary was. It felt like he was looking at the world map of a FPS game.

There was no more need to draw it on paper. But as he looked at the map, letters appeared.

[Threaten the guards to find out Song Won-jin's whereabouts!]

Tae-hyuk smiled.

“It is the same as a game. Is this a new ability that was obtained after becoming a King?”

Even now, the Demon Revealing Mirror. was in one of Tae-hyuk's pockets. In the first place, it was something that he couldn't throw away. But now it was giving a command.

“Well, isn't this feature convenient?”

The map displayed the people wandering around.

He seemed like he could reach the security office without being noticed by anyone. Tae-hyuk confidently walked down the corridor. There was no need to act covertly and arouse suspicions.

“Huhuhu, I’ve arrived.”

He met a few people on the way but he walked naturally past them.

Tae-hyuk looked at his body. He still looked like the reporter.

“This is good, but it is better to change from here onwards.”

First of all, he turned off Counterfeit and his clothes returned to normal. He moved his finger and easily turned into the Bomber, Kim Taesung. Inside the jacket was his favorite mask. It was the now familiar Phantom mask.

“Well. This isn’t the time for Phantom to go out so I shouldn’t use it.”

Shattering a large corporation. In this case, he needed to be someone other than Phantom.

Tae-hyuk used Counterfeit on the opera mask and turned it into a skull mask that covered his entire face.

“From now on, I am the Bomber.”

## Chapter 152 – Time To Clean Up #3

---

As he opened the door to the security room, men in black suits glared at him. An uninvited person suddenly entered so one person shouted nervously.

“Who? How did you come in here?”

The reason for their panic was simple.

This was a place that absolutely couldn't be entered without permission, yet a person with a skull mask and leather jacket had entered this place unhindered. It was suspicious, but didn't seem dangerous.

Tae-hyuk scratched his head and said,

“Ah, I have one jajangmyeon for delivery.”

“W-What, jajangmyeon? That would never happen, so get out of here!”

“Aigoo. As expected, it didn't work.”

Tae-hyuk looked at the situation inside as he spoke. There were around 30 guards in the room. They were those in charge of the VVIPs of large corporations. Why were so many security guards needed?

When he used ‘Spying’, the Hawk Eyes attribute automatically activated. He could see the status window of the opponent with it. Since he became King, he was able to recognize the weapons the opponents were carrying.

‘Hyu~ they also have guns.’

There were real guns loaded with bullets. Most guards these days were armed with toys, such as tasers or gas guns, yet the guards here were holding pistols. Furthermore, they were loaded with real bullets, rather than blanks. The guards exuded the same aura of professionalism as a special forces trained unit.

The uproar at the entrance was so loud that the person who seemed to be the leader walked out.

“What? Why is it so noisy?”

“Ah, here...a strange person came here.”

“A strange person?”

“He talked nonsense about delivering jajangmyeon.”

The leader looked at Tae-hyuk with sharp eyes.

Deliveryman? If he wanted to pretend then he should’ve at least

brought an iron box. He didn't even seem like a hitman.

“Well. Maknae. Show the guest out.” (Maknae=the youngest person)

“Yep!”

The leader didn't know what this person's purpose was but he didn't want to make things bigger.

“Guest-nim. I don't know why you are here but it is over. Let's go now.”

A mixed martial arts fighter grabbed Tae-hyuk's arm to drag him out. But there was something odd.

“Eh?”

He touched something metal beneath the leather jacket. But strangely familiar...

The guard realized what it was and screamed.

“Ack! What is this?”

“T-This bastard has a gun!”

It wasn't just one. Tae-hyuk pulled out a Colt M1911 and Beretta 92. It was common in movies to hold guns in both hands. However, those who used guns knew how hard it was to pull off. If the person didn't shoot properly then the accuracy was off and the wrist would be damaged. It wasn't a toy like BB guns...

"I'll tell you in advance that this isn't a model gun."

"Ha? So?"

The other person obviously didn't know how to fire a gun properly. The leader beckoned and the suited men pulled out guns.

Cheolkeok!

The leader said with a smile.

"This isn't a model."

"Yes, OK! The situation can't be resolved by talking to each other right? Okay, okay. Bullet Time."

The skull masked man chanted something like a spell and fired his guns.

Tatang! Tang! Tatang!

“Kwaaaack!”

“What, what is this?”

A few guards collapsed in an instant from holes in their heads. The leader of the guards realized the serious situation and shouted,

“H-He has a real gun! Everybody take cover! There is only one opponent! If we remain calm then we can beat him!”

They were elites in the security industry that were trained at the special forces level. However, they struggled to deal with one intruder. In the first place, this wasn't a suitable room to fight in. There was no place to hide their bodies properly.

In the meantime, the opponent was firing through gaps like they were targets at the shooting range.

“Why can't we take out someone who isn't even hiding?”

Then a guard behind a couch shouted,

“S-Something is strange! How did this happen...?”

It was natural for the guards to panic. The opponent was fighting with his body exposed but their bullets didn't hit him at all. It was like he knew where all of the attacks were coming from.



“Ugh! Ah, it can’t be helped. Here I am!”

In the end, the leader fired his gun. He aimed at the opponent’s chest. Then the skeleton masked person raised a hand to block the bullet.

“Puhaha! Fool! Do you think you can stop a bullet with your arm?!”

Ting!

Then his mouth dropped open as he saw the bullet bounce off the skull masked person’s arm.

“H-How...?”

The skull masked person grinned.

“Oh, I came here to sell a new arm. It is bulletproof.”

---

He was literally overwhelming.

The guards boasted significant shooting skills that couldn’t be compared to the mafia. However, he was able to easily deal with them thanks to his upgraded crime skills.

‘It is good that I modified the human body.’

Currently, Tae-hyuk had the body of a human. Illegal Surgery evolved into Body Modification. He could freely use Machina, a machine arm, instead of his original arm. Of course, it was forged to look like a human arm, but it was actually Machina, made from a superalloy. It was to the extent that it could block bullets.

‘But the damage to Machina is considerable. I should try to avoid bullets if at all possible.’

As he looked at the guards, the Demon Revealing Mirror sent him a notification.

[Number of remaining guards: 14/31]

Then red dots appeared on the map, showing where the guards were currently located. He used Bullet Time to accelerate his mind and the bullet lines to see where the opponents were firing their guns. No matter the difference in numbers, it would be strange if Tae-hyuk lost.

‘If I knew this then I would’ve come with a machine gun, not pistols. It feels good to shoot them one by one.’

Tae-hyuk thought as he fired at a guard who protruded his head from the table he was hiding behind.

Tatang! Tatang!

Every time his gun fired, a guard collapsed. The bullets fired from the opponents were easy to block. Once the number of guards reached 10, the opponents surrendered.

“D-Don’t shoot! We will give you anything you want! J-Just spare our lives!”

The screams of the shot bodyguards could be heard from around the room. The leader of the guards was at a loss for words. A shootout was occurring in a building in the middle of the city.

“Hrmm. You seem to be the highest ranking one here.”

“T-That’s right!”

The leader walked forward with both hands up. Tae-hyuk clicked his tongue and muttered,

“Sheesh. I wanted to kill a little more.”

He spoke like it was a game.

“K-Kuheok!”

The leader moaned with a bitter expression. His precious men were killed or injured. Tae-hyuk slowly walked closer and asked,

“Where is Chairman Song Won-jin right now?”

“Y-You are after Chairman...!”

“I just asked where Chairman Song Won-jin is.”

“.....”

Tae-hyuk smirked as the leader didn't answer.

“Are you remaining silent? Then...”

He aimed his Beretta 92 pistol at the head of a man that was currently moaning on the ground

“.....!”

“I will ask you once again. Where is Chairman Song Won-jin?”

“W-What the hell is your identity...!”

“You should've answered well. Why don't you understand?”

Tae-hyuk fired at the head of another guard. It wasn't a threatening shot. He made sure to take the other person's life.

"I-I understand! I-I will answer."

The leader realized that he would be left until last and started to reveal what he knew.

"Hrmm... He was there."

"That is everything I know. So the remaining people..."

"Huh? Did I make a promise to spare your lives?"

Tatang!

Tae-hyuk shot towards the chest of the leader. He couldn't even groan and died instantly.

"T-This scammer! You said you would spare us!"

The guards, who had been giving up, raised their guns and started their last hurrah. However, the result was just like before. Tae-hyuk looked at the dozens of guards collapsed around him and installed a bomb in a corner of the room. There was someone who was still breathing but it didn't matter.

“It is small but it is enough to blow up the room. This will get rid of the bodies and evidence all at once.”

Tae-hyuk quickly left the security room and hit the detonator, causing the bomb to explode with a loud bang. Tae-hyuk was no longer interested as he looked at the Demon Revealing Mirror.

“Well. Interesting. This is how it works.”

[Find Chairman Song Won-jin and get information!]

A new message appeared on the Demon Revealing Mirror. The leader said that Chairman Song Won-jin was hiding in a hotel with a entertainment spot. Then his next destination was decided. He had to leave here before the people who heard the explosion came running.

Tae-hyuk walked out onto the streets where the hot sun was shining. It was a bit unsettling that he didn't show any emotions after just killing dozens of people.

He had completely become a criminal.

---

A castle like structure was located not far from the city centre. It was the J Hotel that only the peak of the political and economic world could enter.

Of course, the hotel was luxurious and had the finest entertainment. As Tae-hyuk tried to enter, a security guard stopped him.

“This place is only for reserved guests.”

“Reserved? I made a reservation.”

“Huh? W-What?”

Tae-hyuk pretended to pull something out from his pocket and hit the guard’s head with his iron pipe. There were many people inside the building. A gunshot would definitely be noticed.

“I should use Transformation so that I can enter peacefully. In fact, I should’ve met the guards as Song Won-jin. I’m sorry.”

He didn’t sound sorry as he entered the hotel. A woman with a strange hair color approached him.

“Ah, Guest-nim! Welcome! Please let me know your reservation number and I will guide you there.”

She thought he was a normal guest because he passed through the entrance.

“Oh, I just went to the convenience store for a while. I don’t

remember my room number.”

Tae-hyuk had turned into Song Won-jin before passing through the front door. A security guard would have to show a pass, but customers were different. With this face, he had a free pass.

The female staff replied with a smile.

“I’m sorry, could you tell me your membership number?”

“Um.”

Unfortunately, he didn’t know that. During this time, Song Won-jin’s phone might ring.

Should he threaten her with a gun? If he shot a few areas without killing her, then she would probably speak. As he was thinking that, a man passed by.

“Ah, C-Chairman! When did you leave? I’ll guide you back to your room.”

Tae-hyuk looked at the nametag of the other person and said.

“Uh, Chief Kim. Thank you.”

“Haha! No. We are always working so that Chairman-nim can



relax.”

Fortunately, he was a person who knew Song Won-jin. Thanks to that, Tae-hyuk was able to easily find the room where Song Won-jin was staying.

As he opened the door, hot air and strange moaning could be heard.

“Pant...! Pant pant! W-What? I didn’t order room service.”

Song Won-jin, who was gasping for breath above a woman, turned and looked at the entrance.

“A-Ack! W-What?”

It was Chief Kim who reacted. Two people with the same face looked at each other. Of course, one person stood with a cynical expression while the other person was lying on the bed.

“Ah, Chief Kim went through a lot of trouble. Please rest.”

He swung the iron pipe at Chief Kim’s head. Then he entered the room and said,

“Chairman Song, it has been a while. Ah, I shouldn’t speak while looking like this.”

Tae-hyuk laughed and placed the skull mask on his face.

“I have a few things to ask you.”

“Kya, aaaack!”

The female who was with Song Won-jin screamed. Tae-hyuk also hit her with the iron pipe and sat next to Song Won-jin.

“Will you tell me? We are close friends.”

He took off the mask to reveal the face of Kim Tae-sung, the Bomber.

# Chapter 153 – Time To Clean Up #4

---

T-That person...!

Song Won-jin asked in a quivering voice.

“Y-You...w-who are you?”

“Eh? You don’t know? Really?”

“I-I-I don’t know!”

Oh, look at this. Tae-hyuk smiled.

Song Won-jin’s words seemed to be true. He was the chairman of Taesung Chemicals. He took the lives of Kim Taesung’s family and drove him to become the Bomber, yet he didn’t even know Kim Taesung’s face.

“How funny. Really funny.”

Tae-hyuk brought his mouth to Song Won-jin’s ear and whispered,

“I am called the Bomber.”

“.....!”

Now Song Won-jin realized who was in front of him.

“Now do you understand why I came here?”

“...T-This is ridiculous. You can’t do anything but make bombs...  
H-How did you...?”

Chairman Song Won-jin seemed terribly confused. However, he started looking at one corner of the room.

“Hrmm. There must be bodyguards in the next room. You are probably expecting them to come and save you when you give a signal.”

“K-Kuock! ...You must have come here for a suicide bombing. You must have known that I was here. But this is the end. Surely you didn’t think I would come here without any preparations!”

Song Won-jin pressed the pager hidden in his pillow. Then the connecting door opened and the security guards waiting in the next room rushed out. Originally, they would’ve stayed in the same room as Song Won-jin to protect him.

However, he sent them away for a while and this happened, and now the situation was reversed. Even if the Bomber had a bomb, it would be over if he was taken out before pressing the button.

“C-Chairman-nim! Are you okay?”

Song Won-jin exclaimed,

“K-Kill this bastard!”

The elite bodyguards moved quickly. They were holding something that looked like a briefcase. In fact, the guards pressed the knob and pulled out a special gun. Song Won-jin smiled with satisfaction as gunmen suddenly appeared. The Bomber would be riddled with holes due to the bodyguards...

Tae-hyuk shrugged and used Bullet Time. He aimed his pistol and killed four bodyguards in an instant.

“H-Heok! W-What is this?”

“Isn’t the situation flowing differently from what you thought?”

“.....”

For the first time, fear entered Song Won-jin’s eyes.

“Now it seems like we are ready to talk seriously.”

“...What are you? The Bomber is clearly an ordinary human...  
Aaaaack! P-P-Phantom!”

Song Won-jin realized who was in front of him. He heard that Phantom had broken the Bomber out of prison. Therefore, he strengthened his security by several times. They always checked if there were bombs installed, everywhere he went.

Song Won-jin thought that Phantom broke out the Bomber because he needed the bombs, yet Phantom had come barging in here.

Tae-hyuk said with a smile,

“That reminds me, didn’t I get paid when the case involving Taesung was revealed? I was just trying to make money. Don’t blame me too much.”

“T-That is meaningless...”

“I’m sorry. I’m a little busy. Let’s get straight to the point. Ah, don’t try to run away.”

Tae-hyuk shot at Song Won-jin’s foot as he tried to run away.

“Kwaaaack!”

“You can keep trying to run away. But next time, I’ll shoot something between your legs, so be careful.”

“.....”

Song Won-jin nodded desperately with a white face.

“Then let’s start the fun question time. First of all, who invented the bomb?”

“.....”

“Well, that isn’t very important.”

“K-Kuhok, ugh... I-I understand! I-I will answer. I was the head of the research institute. I never gave the command...”

“That isn’t my question.”

Song Won-jin gulped at the unexpected words.

“Don’t you have a friendship with the Yakuza who came across the water?”

“.....!”

Song Won-jin was shocked.

After seeing his expression, Tae-hyuk realized that this was the last piece of the puzzle. But first, he needed to get a clear answer

from Song Won-jin's mouth.

“What are you doing with them?”

“T-That...”

Tatang!

“K-Kuaaack!” Wahh...! Kuaaaaak!”

Tae-hyuk looked at the blood splattering Song Won-jin's crotch.

“I told you. If you don't answer properly, then I will shoot. There is only one chance. The next time...”

“...K-Kuock. Kk...”

Song Won-jin looked at his groin bitterly. He had lost the most important part for a man.

“There is no more time to do that.”

Tae-hyuk pointed a gun at Song Won-jin's head. In the end, Song Won-jin couldn't endure it anymore and shouted.

“...R-Right! The Yakuza are behind the Taesung Group!”



“It would’ve been good if you had said that sooner. What are you doing with the Yakuza?”

“T-That... I can never say it...”

“Perhaps this person threatened to kill you if you leaked such secrets?”

Tae-hyuk took off the skull mask for a brief moment and Mister Park’s face was revealed.

“M-M-Mister Park!”

Mister Park’s name emerged from the mouth of the shocked Song Won-jin.

“Tsk. I would have told you to watch your mouth.”

“...Phantom already knows everything.”

“Actually, it is only half-way.”

“This, shit...”

In the end, Song Won-jin was forced to tell everything that he knew. He might die at the hands of the Yakuza, but he needed to

escape from the threat in front of him first.

“...Yes. We are doing research for the Yakuza.”

“What research?”

“The Yakuza call it Psychotropic Incense. It is a special fragrance with a brainwashing effect.”

“Do you know the raw material that it is made out of?”

“I know that it isn’t a normal material.”

“Shouldn’t you know since you are doing research on it?”

“.....”

Song Won-jin didn’t say anything for a while. He knew what the Taesung Group was doing to make money. The moment he expressed this, his life would be like a fire in front of the wind. Even if he escaped from Phantom, he would die at the hands of the Yakuza.

“Then what is the relationship between the Psychotropic Incense and the virus killing event?”

Song Won-jin opened his mouth with a troubled expression. He

would've never said this if a gun wasn't pointed at his head.

“It is very hard to make the Psychotropic Incense. However, it is possible to increase the Psychotropic Incense if there is the T-1 virus, and it can even be spread through the air.”

“Whoa. Wait a minute. Then you can enslave the whole country using the Psychotropic Incense?”

“T-That's correct. Of course, it is still in the research stage, but once it is completed, we can sell Taesung Group products more efficiently than anyone else. When that happens, we will be the largest group in the country... No, the world's greatest...”

Tae-hyuk smiled.

This was why they were studying something like the Psychotropic Incense. It seemed like he didn't know how dangerous the Psychotropic Incense was.

‘When I was in the Death Circus, it only clouded people's judgment. But it is evolving gradually through research.’

Then Mister Park would borrow the name of his twin brother to enter the political world. Something would go wrong and he would be killed. A young guard in his 20s got involved without knowing anything. That young man would unfairly go to prison for 10 years, only to receive the death penalty.

The whole thing hadn't begun yet, but Tae-hyuk knew what would happen.

“Really? Then who ordered that the Bomber's family be used as an experiment?”

Tae-hyuk wanted to know who had turned him into a scapegoat. The person giving both orders was likely to be the same.

“That, I really don't know! The Yakuza are in charge of the research institute...”

Tae-hyuk smirked. Yes, that was the case.

“But weren't you the one who ordered it to be kept as secret as possible? Then aren't you responsible?”

“.....”

“Well, you answered my questions, so I'll finish it here.”

“T-This is the end? R-Really?”

“Ah. I have one last thing to ask. Where did the institute move to?”

“T-That...”

Song Won-jin eyes's shook but there was suddenly a gunshot from somewhere.

Tatang!

“K-Keok...”

“H-How dare you betray Oyabun! Hooray Yamaguchi!”

One of the bodyguards was still alive. His trembling hands held the briefcase as blood poured from his mouth. The deep smell of death filled the room.

Tae-hyuk licked his lips.

“Sheesh. I didn't get to hear the most important thing. Well, it doesn't really matter.”

Without looking back, he shot the bodyguard with the pistol.

“I'm sorry but I already know the location of the institute.”

Hawk Eyes allowed him to see the status window of the opponent, and briefly displayed the person's current psychological state. As soon as Tae-hyuk mentioned the institute, Song Won-jin had recalled the location. Naturally, the location of the research institute was marked on the Demon Revealing Mirror.

“Ku, kukukuk... Goodbye Song Won-jin. Don’t worry, your friends will follow you soon.”

Tae-hyuk said with a laugh.

As he rose from his seat, he saw something in the mirror covering one entire wall of the hotel room.

“.....?”

The place where the eyeballs were supposed to be was a hollow space. The mouth was ripped from ear to ear and something red dripped whenever he laughed.

Something looked at Tae-hyuk and laughed,

Tae-hyuk realized who it was.

“What, it is me.”

He shook his head a few times and the reflection in the mirror became Tae-hyuk’s original image. He had to be tired.

Maybe he used the crime skills too much, but he couldn’t rest just yet.

---

Tae-hyuk looked at the research institute in front of him. It was considerably large since it was attached to a university. On the street, researchers wearing white gloves were talking together happily.

‘The atmosphere isn’t bad. Now, this place...’

As Tae-hyuk got out of the taxi, somebody followed him. They took his hand and said,

“Tae-hyuk, this is the Wolsang Institute. Starting from next year, Noona has decided to attend the university attached to it.”

“Well, it isn’t bad.”

Tae-hyuk smiled at Ha-ran.

However, he suddenly lost his appetite.

‘Noona suddenly said that she wants to go to this university.’

Originally, he was planning to go to another research institute. Suddenly, Ha-ran said that the director of the Wolsang Institute wanted to talk to him. He had planned to refuse and strike the Taesung Research Institute of Physics and Chemistry, but something strange lingered in his mind.

It was like a premonition. In order to find out what it was, he decided to meet the director of the Wolsang Institute.

‘Fortunately, I removed all witnesses, so the Taesung research institute won’t be removed again any time soon.’

Ha-ran pulled Tae-hyuk’s hand and cried out,

“Now, let’s go!”

Her footsteps were very light at the thought of this being her university life from next year. Tae-hyuk laughed as he touched something in his pocket. He had forgotten for a while, but that smile...

Eh? What was it?



# Chapter 154 – End Of The Revenge #1

---

Wolsang was a research institute specializing in particle physics.

The task that they were focusing on now was a new energy development project that could potentially be several times more efficient than fossil fuels. If it succeeded, all the researchers who participated would be able to win the Nobel Prize in physics.

‘The looks in their eyes are ridiculous. Besides, isn’t that a particle accelerator?’

It was a device that boasted a huge price, but there was a lot of dust piled up on it. It meant it hadn’t been used for research in a while.

A researcher was sitting on a desk and seemed to be writing a report with an annoyed expression.

‘It is typical of a research institute with no money.’

In any case, the situation of the Wolsang Institute didn’t seem that great.

‘Certainly, this seems more difficult than robotics or developing a new material.’

There seemed to be a lot of empty chairs, indicating that the

management of this institute wasn't so good. Great achievements required a lot of money, but if there weren't any results, then they wouldn't get any investments.

It was literally a Mobius strip.

“Ah! Director Go Ah-tae! Hello, it is Ha-ran.”

Ha-ran said with a smile and the man sitting in the corner lifted his head. The ramyun noodles cups piled up on his desk indicated how long he had been here.

He had a beard from not shaving for a few days. The skinny body also indicated the time spent here. Was he around 40 years old? He was fairly young for a director. He also didn't have a separate office, working in the same space as the other researchers.

“Ha-ran? Ah, please wait a moment. I'll bring some drinks.”

Go Ah-tae headed to the refreshments room with a friendly smile. He swayed strangely like he was ill.

“Haha! I ran out of coffee. Sorry but this...”

Go Ah-tae brought out cups containing cold water. There wasn't a trap so he held all three cups in his hands with an anxious expression.

“Help yourselves.”

“Wah! I am thirsty. I’ll drink it well.”

Go Ah-tae had heard about Tae-hyuk through Ha-ran.

“Are you Seo Tae-hyuk? I’ve heard a lot about you from Ha-ran. Nice to meet you, I am Go Ah-tae, the director of this institute.”

“I am Seo Tae-hyuk.”

Tae-hyuk secretly used Spying to check his status window. Stamina was almost zero, but his intelligence was enormous. Furthermore, he had a profession other than the director of a research institute.

‘Isn’t this quite surprising? Fortunately, there aren’t any problems.’

Tae-hyuk analyzed the situation of the research institute. The facility had received a good amount of investments, so the equipment was good. It was comparable to places like the European particle physics institutes. But the companies that invested in these type of places were in a rush, so if no visible results were shown, then they would withdraw themselves from the project.

This situation was just like that. The researchers moved to other places and this was what remained. The director was somehow

leading the project by himself, but it seemed like there was a limit. It was just before the sinking of the ship.

‘He had a reason to invest in Noona. It is a situation where he even needs to borrow the hands of university students.’

Still, it seemed like there would be a lot to learn from working under such an enthusiastic director. It was enough if Ha-ran was satisfied. If it was money then he would soon be able to earn a big amount anyway.

‘Yes, help the Bomber get revenge and then go find the gold. Most of the Yakuza in Korea are returning to Japan so this is a great opportunity. And the remaining ones are probably...’

As Tae-hyuk smiled, Go Ah-tae asked him.

“I think that Tae-hyuk’s mind is very good. Do you want to make something like a black hole?”

“...I’m sorry but I have to go to university.”

“T-That’s right. If you change your mind then here is my contact number...”

After spending an hour talking, Go Ah-tae had another appointment. He had to go to another research institute for assistance. Even though he seemed quite busy, he still called them there to talk.

Director Go Ah-tae's expectations for Ha-ran seemed quite big.

---

Tae-hyuk turned to the Bomber sitting in the back seat of a stolen Mercedes and asked.

“Can you artificially create a black hole?”

“It is impossible with the current technology. Won't it be hard unless the Higgs Particle is discovered?”

“Indeed.”

“But why are you asking about such a thing?”

“Ah, it is nothing. Just a personal matter.”

The Bomber laughed and checked the bombs filling the back seat. They were enough to blow up the entire Taesung Chemicals research institute.

“By the way, I didn't know that the perpetrator of the disease was Direct Jang Ik-sam.”

“Do you know him?”

“Not really. I just thought that he was a good person. Yet my family... K-Kuheok!”

The Bomber bit his lip and suppressed his anger. He formed tight fists and said,

“Please let me handle Director Jang Ik-sam with my own hands.”

“I was already planning on that.”

Tae-hyuk parked 500m away from the Taesung Institute of Physics and Chemistry. Then he pulled out a large map. Last night, he had gone to the destination and used Spying. This was the result.

“This is a blueprint of Taesung Institute. The bombs will be installed in the places shown here. If they explode at the same time, then we can blow up the entire institute.”

“Yes, I understand. Then this place with the O mark is...”

“The director’s room is there. Do you understand what I mean?”

“Thank you for keeping your promise, Phantom.”

The Bomber memorized the locations of the bombs.

“Let me explain an outline of the operation. Currently, the Taesung Institute had a huge increase in the number of guards. I will go into the institute first and deal with them while you install the bombs in the specified points. After that is done, go to the room where Jang Ik-sam. Do you know what to do after that?”

“...Of course.”

“What weapon do you want?”

The Bomber picked out a pistol from the weapons in the car.

“Can you shoot it?”

“Haha. I also went to the army.”

“Well. This should be fine.”

The Bomber confirmed that there were six bullets in the magazine and placed it in his pocket. This would be enough to take care of Jang Ik-sam. Tae-hyuk nodded and started walking silently in the darkness.

The Bomber followed quietly with a heavy bag.

‘This is truly the end of my previous life. The Psychotropic Incense is really important so Mister Park has kept it all in the

institute and guarded by Yakuza members. I can change my fate if I take care of this.'

Mister Park was also in the laboratory. Tae-hyuk had been falsely framed thanks to Mister Park.

Jang Ik-sam had killed the Bomber's family.

'Whoops, I almost forgot. After this, should I go and buy a wedding gift for Noona?'

Seo Ha-ran and Cho Kang-suk's wedding ceremony was taking place next week. Tae-hyuk moved through the darkness as he thought about what to buy his sister.

And after a while...

The operation to break his ties with Mister Park began.

---

The Taesung Institute of Physics and Chemistry was in the research complex until a year ago. After public opinion turned against them for the mass killing event, the location was moved to a secret place.

It was right here. Tae-hyuk looked at the research institute in front of him. It seemed like there was nothing inside. However, that was just a camouflage to conceal the identity. The Taesung



Institute of Physics and Chemistry was hiding underground.

Tae-hyuk placed his hand on the wall and triggered 'Spying'. Then he was able to see how many people were hiding in the building. As if it had been waiting, the Demon Revealing Mirror assigned him a mission.

[Kill Mister Park and the Yakuza members.

The remaining number of Yakuza members: 117]

This was the first time it said to kill the opponents. He wasn't planning to keep them alive anyway so he decided to follow the Demon Revealing Mirror's mission. After receiving the mission, he could see the targets on the map.

In front of Tae-hyuk's eyes, the map of the research institute appeared like a hologram. The red dots were shining brightly. They were the Yakuza members guarding the institute.

"The Psychotropic Incense is really important. Aren't most of the Yakuza members remaining in South Korea?"

Of course, there were other remnants left. However, most of the people who could fight were gathered here.

"It means that if I get rid of them, the ones who will interfere

with my treasure hunt will also disappear. It is good luck.”

Tae-hyuk licked his lips. It tasted oddly of blood.

“Then let’s go.”

The Bomber tilted his head and asked,

“But the surveillance cameras watching the walls...”

“Who said we were going over the wall? I am going in this way.”

Kikikikik!

Tae-hyuk raised his robotic arms and cried out.

“Machina, mode Smash!”

Both Machina arms were pulled back to their limit. Then they shot towards the wall in front of him.

Kuwaaaaaang!

Then the wall made of cement shattered with a huge roar. The Bomber was speechless.

“.....”

An excavator was needed to break a wall of that thickness. However, a human had punched it with the force of a machine. He could imagine what would happen if that was used to attack humans. They would literally become chunks of flesh.

But this wasn't the end. Tae-hyuk was dressed in a modified version of the body armour worn by Big Brother from the Triads. One or two bullets wouldn't give him any fatal injuries, and most aggressive actions were possible.

‘Furthermore, Machina can be used to protect my exposed head.’

He could see the trajectory of the bullets and had Bullet Time that accelerated his mind. He was confident that he alone could win against an army.

Tae-hyuk had two pistols hanging from his waist and a FA-MAS 62 rifle on his shoulder. There were 20 magazines containing 12 bullets. He had a bunch of pockets in his body armour, allowing him to hold them all. He was significantly armed but this wasn't that much if he was to fight over 100 Yakuza.

If they all attacked at once, it would be difficult to avoid all the shots, even with Bullet Time. Therefore, he chose an appropriate route.

Tae-hyuk placed the skull mask on his face. The Bomber was

wearing a mask of the same design.

“Then it is a showdown between two bombers and 117 Yakuza members. It would be a plausible action movie if this was filmed. Unfortunately, that will have to wait for the next opportunity.”

Once Tae-hyuk gave the signal, the Bomber started running towards the place where the bombs would be installed.

The skull mask shone white in the darkness.

“Then it is time to kill.”

## Chapter 155 – End Of The Revenge #2

---

Chairman Song Won-jin died. He had been killed while in hiding.

The Yakuza panicked. Only a few people in the Taesung Group knew where he was hiding. But how did the killer know where he was hiding? In addition, he always stuck with his carefully selected bodyguards.

Plus, a spy had been planted among Song Won-jin's guards. If there was anything suspicious, then it would've been reported to the higher-ups immediately. If Song Won-jin ever attempted to leak anything confidential then the spy would make it seem like he committed suicide.

In the end, Song Won-jin was just a chess pawn for the Yakuza. However, Song Won-jin and his bodyguards were annihilated.

Who killed him? Eventually, an investigator was sent to find out what happened.

“O-Oh my god...”

The investigator doubted his eyes. Everything was turned to ashes like a bomb had blown up the room. And the black things scattered around were probably... The investigator gathered them and started analyzing what caused this.

However, he couldn't figure out the exact cause of the explosion

because it was so intense. If there was a firefight, then there would be things like bullets. The investigator didn't find anything and concluded that Song Won-jin's death was due to a bomb attack.

The most likely culprit was Kim Taesung, the bomber who had bad feelings towards the Taesung Group. In the end, the Yakuza prepared for a war against the Bomber.

Of course, they never dreamt that Tae-hyuk had used Robbery and Forgery to erase all signs from the room.

They were unaware that their enemy was Phantom.

---

There was no need to look with his eyes. He was able to see the positions of the enemies with the Demon Revealing Mirror.

Tae-hyuk licked his lips.

‘As expected, the remnants of the Yakuza are gathered here. This means...’

The bombs had a wide range of explosion. However, that was only if the bombs were installed.

Gathering a large number of guards here was simple. Mister Park put pressure on the prosecutors to catch the Bomber before turning this place into a fortress. In the end, if Tae-hyuk crushed

this place, then he would be able to cut his fate with the Yakuza, which had continued since his previous life.

Yakuza members poured from the other side of the hallway and fired their guns at Tae-hyuk.

Tutututu!

Loud noises filled the air that were enough to burst his eardrums.

“M-Monster! D-Die!”

However, they couldn’t inflict any injuries on Tae-hyuk.

Kikikiki!

By moving Machina, he could easily block the bullets fired at his head. Tae-hyuk clicked his tongue and muttered.

“Who is a monster? How many people have you killed in the meantime? Personally, it is a little unfair.”

He activated Bullet Time as they fired. Thanks to this, Tae-hyuk’s perception of time was reduced by dozens of times. It was like the world moved in slow motion.

Tae-hyuk moved quickly.

‘Two people behind the wall. And seven across the hallway.’

The map showed the people trying to ambush him. He moved forward and easily overpowered the seven opponents.

‘But what I have to do now is not just get rid of the enemy. I need to turn their gaze away from the Bomber towards me.’

In order to do that, he had to act very loudly. By scanning the map, Tae-hyuk could tell that the Bomber wasn't far from his location. It was one of the points where a bomb should be installed to blow up the laboratory.

‘The next two!’

1/3 of the Yakuza in the institute were already cold bodies on the floor. However, he was approaching his limit. No matter how overwhelming the abilities, even the crime skills weren't invincible.

Bullet Time had a duration of one minute and Machina didn't have endless durability. In the end, he couldn't go to the centre of the institute where Mister Park was. The key to this operation was the Bomber.

Tae-hyuk concealed himself in the darkness and watched the Yakuza. The opponents were already overwhelmed with panic.



“W-What the hell is this?! Why won’t he die? Wasn’t he clearly shot?”

“T-The opponent is a g-ghost...”

“Ack! I ran out of bullets! You, do you have any spare mags left?”

“The opponent is obviously the Bomber! This doesn’t make sense!”

“C-Call for reinforcements!”

In the end, the Yakuza members did something they should never do. They tried to confront the enemy away from the important defense points of the fortress. If someone had a good understanding of tactics and strategy then it was something they would’ve never done.

‘Come to think of it, maybe one of them are the descendants of the Japanese who invaded Korea during the Joseon Dynasty? If I think about that time, their decisions were pretty cute.’

Tae-hyuk laughed. Then he attacked the place where the Yakuza were busy servicing their equipment.

‘Truly easy opponents!’

There was a water pipe on the ceiling. He aimed the pistol at it

and water started to pour down with a thunderous sound.

Hwaaaaaack!

“If you are in the basement then you should be careful of flooding!”

A masked gunman attacked from behind the water. It was a terrible predicament!

“Aaaack!”

The Yakuza were soaked in water and randomly fired their guns.

“Aigoo. If you shoot me like this then you won’t have enough bullets left.”

However, this was more difficult than when they were aiming properly. It was hard to avoid all the random bullet lines. He had to defend himself against a few with Machina. Despite the diamond like strength, the Machina couldn’t withstand the hail of bullets and started breaking.

“Ah, I’m sorry. I was trying to relax. This is the time limit. Now I’ll go faster.”

The Yakuza were shocked after hearing Tae-hyuk’s words. He had been relaxed until now?

“Then showtime.”

Tae-hyuk grabbed a pistol in both hands and pulled the trigger.

Tatang!

---

The Bomber, Kim Taesung, grabbed his shaking right arm..

All the preparations were finished. He succeeded in installing the bombs in all the places indicated on the map. Now he could blow up the institute at any time by just pressing the detonator.

“Pant... Pant... Pant!”

The Bomber leaned against the wall and breathed roughly. He had to run for almost two hours through the institute to install the bombs.

He heard fighting from a place not far away from him. It was like a war zone with gunshots and shouting. Then somebody died.

He knew who did it.

The masked man, ‘Phantom.’

Miracles were always created from his fingertips. Kim Taesung couldn't do anything but make bombs. He had gotten this far thanks to Phantom.

Biiik!

Then the radio made a noise.

–I guess it is around the time that the installation is finished.

“Yes, Point G has been completed.”

–Then be careful. There might be a few people in the hallways. Don't worry, it isn't impossible for you to move.

The Bomber got goose bumps as he realized what Phantom was saying. There was something white across the hallway. It was a corridor deep underground but he didn't care what was down there. But he took a deep breath once he realized what Phantom was suggestion.

“Phantom...what are you...?”

–I can blow this up right now but it won't be your revenge. I'll give you 10 minutes. Finish everything and come to Point A. There will be a vehicle for you to escape.

“U-Understood.”

He closed off contact with Phantom. The Bomber gulped and looked at the darkness in front of him. It was like an abyss that led to hell.

...It seemed like not even moonlight could penetrate the darkness. The Bomber... No, very little remained in Kim Taesung's heart. He had to finish everything before this warmth disappeared.

“Sang-ah...”

The enemies of his wife and daughter were there.

Kim Taesung bit his lip and headed to the underground laboratory. Not long after, Kim Taesung arrived in front of a firmly closed door. Once it opened...

---

When on Earth did things go wrong?

Mister Park was tense. It hadn't been a week since Phantom defeated them in the mafia game. He had been concentrating on finishing the Psychotropic Incense, but now he received news that Taesung Chemical's chairman Song Won-jin had died.

The culprit was a researcher who used to work for Taesung Chemical's research institute.

“Director Jang Ik-sam. What was the name of the researcher?”

The elderly man walking nervously around the shelter answered,

“Ah, Kim Taesung.”

“Hrmm. It is obviously more famous under the nickname the Bomber.”

“Yes...that’s right. I’m sorry. I should’ve taken care of him properly...”

Then Mister Park shouted in a tense voice,

“Damn...! If you knew that then you should’ve reported it properly! Do I have to pay attention to everything?”

“.....”

“No matter how great the Bomber is, he won’t be able to get in here. At best, he will be crushed by the building.”

Even if a bomb went off, they were safe inside this shelter. Mister Park and Jang Ik-sam were in the core of the research institute. It was a place where confidential secrets that absolutely couldn’t be leaked were kept. The downside was that radio waves couldn’t pass through, so communication had to be done through specially

designed handsets. However, it had recently been jammed.

“No way out...”

Then the door opened and someone entered. Jang Ik-sam knew that face.

“K-Kim Taesung! H-How did you get through security...?”

Kim Taesung aimed a gun at Jang Ik-sam with trembling hands.

“...Now, Jang Ik-sam! I will send you to hell!”

Jang Ik-sam started to laugh.

“Hahaha! Do you want to kill me with a gun?”

Jang Ik-sam made a gesture and the bodyguards waiting with him pulled out their guns.

“I praise the fact that you made it here. But you are surely dead. Can you kill me?”

“That is a lot of talk, Jang Ik-sam!”

Tatang!

Kim Taesung fired his gun.

It flew towards Jang Ik-sam and literally stopped in front of him. The opponent didn't die.

“Pfft! Puhahaha! How funny, funny! Didn't you know? This shelter is protected by bulletproof glass! Did you shoot a gun in the army? Aren't you a moderately good shot? Puhuhuhu! Well, it was nice to see you after a long time, but this is the end. Goodbye Bomber.”

Jang Ik-sam motioned to his bodyguards. Apart from the bulletproof glass, he coldly closed the door of the shelter completely by pressing a switch. Then no matter how many bombs exploded outside, the dust wouldn't be able to enter here. Plus...

“Oh, I almost forgot. The special Psychotropic Incense made at the institute is installed in the air vents. If an intruder enters then it can be sprayed. Then what would happen?”

“.....”

“The person responsible for the incense will fall victim to it.”

Of course, the guards outside will be sacrificed but it doesn't matter. Jang Ik-sam smirked and pressed the containment button of the shelter. Now the Psychotropic Incense would spread through the entire research institute except for here.



## Chapter 156 – End Of The Revenge #3

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‘In the end, Machina’s maneuvering limit is around two hours.’

Currently, Tae-hyuk had the Machina replacing both of his arms. Since upgrading to ‘King’, his ‘Illegal Surgery’ skill had evolved into ‘Body Modification’. He was like a converted human who appeared in the movies.

Machina was a machine. It took a lot of training to move it properly. Tae-hyuk forced it using Body Modification. Just using it in simple everyday life was a burden.

‘I used it to smash a wall and to block bullets, so it wouldn’t be strange if the Machina broke down right now.’

The stamina that had risen after becoming a King was barely hanging on. Tae-hyuk massaged his arms and looked at the Demon Revealing Mirror, which marked the location of the remaining survivors in the underground research institute.

After two hours of fighting, the number of Yakuza members remaining was less than half. The survivors lost their will to fight and started to protest. In order to take control of them, he would receive some damage, even with the help of the crime skills and Machina.

This was why the power of the Bomber was necessary. It was impossible to blow up an institute of this size with just one or two bombs. Thus, seven bombs were installed at the optimal points

and would explode at the same time. All the preparations were finished, and he could now blow up the place at any time by pressing the switch.

‘First of all, I have to wait for the Bomber’s revenge to end and then the institute...’

At that moment, Tae-hyuk noticed something strange.

‘...Eh? What the?’

This was an underground research facility. Naturally a ventilation system was installed. However, a light pink smoke was emerging from it.

Tae-hyuk wasn’t the only one to notice this. A place not far from where Tae-hyuk was located. The Yakuza were doing their best to build a base in the laboratory. One of them looked at the smoke being emitted from the vents and shrieked.

“T-The Psychotropic Incense?!”

“Surely they aren’t sacrificing us...!”

“D-Damn! Mister Park has left us!”

“Aaaaack! N-no! This can’t...”

Even those who maintained their composure started to panic. The smoke was a vivid pink. At this level, it was almost like a raw solution. The smoke that was diluted a hundred times could turn people into puppets. But this concentration...

“L-Let me out of here!”

The Yakuza felt like prisoners of war who were trapped in a gas chamber. The Psychotropic Incense instantly spread to cover the Yakuza.

“Kwaaaack! U-Uwak, kuooock!”

Through numerous research, its effectiveness had reached the limit. Originally, it was mixed with alcohol and the fragrant scent spread in the air. But what if it was sent through the ventilation system?

The undiluted solution was sprayed.

Of course, it wasn't poisonous, so it didn't kill the Yakuza.

“Kkuck...! Keeok....kuk!”

But at this moment, the Psychotropic Incense showed an unexpected effect.

“Grr... Grrrrrrrr!”

The eyes of a Yakuza member affected by the Psychotropic Incense turned red. The muscles of his body relaxed and blood vessels bulged out on his face.

“Kuaah! Aaack!”

The Yakuza member started to attack his colleague. He reached out for the neck of the person next to him.

“Kkuck. Kkuk! Keuok!”

His mouth started foaming. From the eyes, blood mixed with water started to flow down. Some people were scratching their necks and vomiting up blood.

Those who inhaled the Psychotropic Incense were no longer human. All reasoning disappeared and they became monsters that wanted to kill.

---

Tae-hyuk groaned as he watched the scene unfolding before him.

‘Once all reason is taken away from the Yakuza, only violence remains.’

The area around him was filled with the smoke of the

Psychotropic Incense. Despite his stats reducing by half, he managed to retain his sanity.

However, his stats were still falling. The moment it reached zero, he would lose control.

The Demon Revealing Mirror let out a warning sound. It would become dangerous if he didn't get out of here right now. Tae-hyuk thought that the Psychotropic Incense just turned humans into puppets. But something this ridiculous was happening.

‘In the end, the Psychotropic Incense is similar to dynamite.’

Sometimes, inventions made in goodwill were distorted. Dynamite was made for mines to work safely in the mines. However, the dynamite became bombs that killed many people.

The Psychotropic Incense was created to steer people to buy the company's products. It gave birth to a larger evil. The virus that they were studying here could propagate infinitely.

From what Tae-hyuk remembered, it had never appeared in the world.

‘...I know as far as 14 years in the future. Then after that...’

If that were to happen, the world would fall into chaos. Maybe even World War Three would happen. However, Tae-hyuk had a bomb switch that could blow this whole place up. The

Psychotropic Incense was a perfume. If he set it on fire before it was absorbed in the body, he could burn it. This meant that he could get rid of everything simply by pressing the switch.

Tae-hyuk's forehead was sweaty as he thought about it. Maybe he was doing something great without knowing it.

‘Let's get out of here first and wait for the Bomber to contact me. However, that situation...’

Maybe the Bomber was in a crisis.

“Well, I prepared ‘that’ for such a situation.”

Tae-hyuk smiled wickedly. It seemed like he wouldn't care even if the world was destroyed.

---

Kim Taesung's body moved at lightning speed.

People said that if there was a crisis, a human could exert the power of Superman. At this moment, he surely transcended human movements.

Bujik!

“Kuook!”

A rough groan emerged from Kim Taesung's mouth. His body blocked the door of the shelter that was attempting to close.

Kim Taesung lost all sensation in his lower body. His spine was crushed by the shock. However, his mind was clear.

The confused Jang Ik-sam shouted,

“W-What are you doing? You blocked it with your body? Are you that eager to die?”

“...J-Jang Ik-sam.”

A fierce look was in Kim Taesung's eyes as he glared at Jang Ik-sam. Mister Park was shocked as he watched from behind. It wasn't something any sane person could do.

Kim Taesung spat out blood. However, he still managed to grab a bomb in his hand. There were seven points from A to G where he had to install the bombs, but there had been eight bombs in his bag.

“T...th...”

What was he trying to say? Kim Taesung had blood flowing from his mouth and couldn't speak properly. However, his hand installed the bomb on the glass.

Mister Park realized what he was trying to do and moved swiftly. If he couldn't stop the Bomber then he would die. He had to stop it.

“What are you doing? Shoot! Shoot him!”

“Yes, yes!”

The bodyguards, who had been staring blankly, aimed their guns.

Dududu!

Dozens of bullets were fired.

“T-this...”

Wasn't this place bulletproof? Mister Park wanted to shout.

Jang Ik-sam howled.

“K-Kim Taesung. I made a mistake. S-So please, my life... I-I will also give you money... How about one billion won?”

“Kuoh, eoo...”



Kim Taesung would lose his life in a few minutes after suffering a fatal injury, so what good was offering him money? But Jang Ik-sam was so confused that he couldn't even think. He put his head to the ground.

Kung! Kung!

“Please spare me! I was wrong! Y-Yes. It was all Mister Park. I didn't want to kill your family. So...”

But Kim Taesung already couldn't hear anything. He just stared at Jang Ik-sam beyond the glass and looked at the bomb that he just installed. He had made it several times stronger than the other seven bombs. It could tear apart the glass and blow up the shelter.

Had Phantom expected that something like this would happen? No, that wasn't important right now. The life of that person in front of him...

Kim Taesung laughed.

Honey... Sang-ah...

From now on, he would be going to the place where they were waiting. He could smile and go.

“T-This bastard!”

Jang Ik-sam threw himself back as Kim Taesung pressed the bomb switch. However, the tempered glass didn't do anything.

Kwaaaaang!

There was a huge explosion that burst the eardrums. Inside the shelter were Jang Ik-sam, Mister Park, and Yakuza members. Everything including the Psychotropic Incense started to burn. At the last moment, Kim Taesung smirked and muttered,

“...Yes, I am the Bomber.”

He himself became the bomb that scorched his enemies.

---

–F-Father!

–Yes? Sang-ah?

–Even if this is a picnic, why are you sleeping on the bench? You have been in the research institute for several months, so this chance to play... It will be wasted if you are sleeping.

–Oh, I fell asleep while waiting for my beautiful daughter.

–Eh? Is Daddy crying? Did you have a strange dream?

–Haha... It was a dream, a dream.

–Hihi. I made sushi and sandwiches for you. Mother will be angry so let's go quickly.

–Oh, she is scary when angry. Let's go quickly.

–Yes!

–Once we finish eating, do you want to go on the rides at the amusement park?

–Wahh! Daddy! Hooray! Can I go on the Blue Dragon Train?

–Of course. Then hurry. Mommy will be waiting.

–Yes? Okay! Mommy will wait forever for Daddy!

–Really?

Ah, I see. How lucky. But it is okay now Honey. You don't have to wait anymore. I'm going right now.

.....

....

---

Kuuong!

He felt a tremendous vibration from his feet like there was an earthquake. Tae-hyuk knew what it meant.

He had the switch for the seven bombs installed in the institute. Kim Taesung only had the switch for one bomb.

“...Your revenge was successful, Bomber.”

He tried to get in contact with the radio, just in case. However, only empty noise was heard. Tae-hyuk left the research institute. Once he exited, there was a black van hiding behind a wall. He had prepared it for the escape.

“I will wait one more minute as promised.”

60...

59...

Tae-hyuk closed his eyes and counted. It didn't matter if Kim Taesung's revenge succeeded or not. In one minute, he would blow up the entire laboratory by pressing his switch.

Mister Park. Psychotropic Incense. Virus. They would all disappear into flames.

“It was really long.”

The persistent relationship from his previous life was finally ending.

“...1. Farewell, Mister Park.”

Tae-hyuk murmured and pressed the switch and the Taesung research institute exploded like a movie.

Kwa kwa kwang!

It was at that moment that the Demon Revealing Mirror popped up in front of Tae-hyuk.

[Learn about the God of Crime.]

-???

# Chapter 157 – Seo Ha-ran's Wish #1

---

In the end, the Bomber got his revenge, at the expense of his life. Tae-hyuk felt regret.

‘Aigoo. There aren’t a lot of bombs left in the inventory, so if you die like this...’

If he had known this, it would’ve been better to learn the skill ‘Bomb Manufacturing’ by disposing of the Bomber directly.

The aftermath of his death was enormous.

A few years ago, the researchers at Taesung Chemicals’ research institute caused a virus to mutate and an incident to occur. Since then, the institute had been closed and all projects had been frozen indefinitely. Yet they continued working on it in an underground facility?

It was a great event that brought tremendous repercussions. Unfortunately, the fearsome substance called Psychotropic Incense all burned up. However, the media loved conspiracy theories and snapped it up like rice cakes.

Furthermore, all the dirty work done on behalf of the Yakuza were revealed. From the position of the Taesung Group, it was pouring oil on a house that was already on fire.

Tae-hyuk used his smartphone to access the Internet. Most of the

news were related to the Taesung Group.

‘In the first place, the Taesung Group was a company with a ridiculous amount of influence.

It would be within the top 10 of all the big companies. Once someone went abroad, they would be able to know the scale of the company. However, Mister Park had been able to control the media until now.

Mister Park became his identical twin brother and entered the political circle.

‘After 10 years, did the company climb up to seventh place?’

Thanks to the sacrifice of the Bomber, that future would never happen. This meant...

The cause of Tae-hyuk going to jail had vanished.

‘Since Mister Park died, there is no one else to act as Park Jung-hwan. Furthermore, the Taesung Group can now barely take care of itself. Then the Yakuza controlling everything from behind...’

Along with the Chinese Triads and the Russian Red Mafia, they were walking around with a chain around their necks.

It was the butterfly effect. The theory that a butterfly’s wings

flapping could cause a hurricane on the other side of the earth.

Tae-hyuk changed his and many others' fates by using his knowledge of the future. Every time he received a reward, it was like he got another piece of the puzzle. In the end, a great picture was formed. He had overturned the table so thoroughly that even the butterfly effect couldn't occur anymore.

Tae-hyuk looked at the Demon Revealing Mirror with a satisfied expression. There was a message to find out about the God of Crime. Nothing had been revealed yet about the conditions required.

However, there was no need to rush. It had been one year since he had first obtained the Demon Revealing Mirror and his crime skills. In the end, he was able to win the fight against fate.

First of all, he decided to relax and enjoy this.

“By the way, I think I am forgetting something very important. What was it?”

Tae-hyuk scratched his head and wondered. Then something suddenly popped into his head.

“...Ah, Noona's wedding gift!”

He had been busy for a while, thanks to the mafia game and the Bomber's revenge. In the meantime, Seo Ha-ran's wedding was



imminent.

“What would be good...?”

Tae-hyuk was deep in thought.

“...In the end, it is a house.”

The place where they were living now was like a mansion compared to their previous rented room. However, Kang-suk was taking care of children. Tae-hyuk recalled that Ha-ran wanted to live in a two-storey house with a garden.

After Kang-suk and Ha-ran got married, Tae-hyuk and Tae-min agreed to live with them until they graduated from university. There would be six people living together so a large house was needed.

Anyway, it was okay if the house was in the suburbs because Kang-suk had bought a car recently.

“Well, how much money do I have now?”

He decided to check the balances of his various accounts. He had collected a significant amount of money while working as Phantom. It increased greatly after the mafia game.

“...4.07 billion?”

Winning the normal lottery gave a jackpot of 500 million won. In one year, the amount he earned was like winning the lottery several times.

Tae-hyuk laughed.

First, he would be able to buy a house for his family for one billion won. He decided to go to a real estate agent in the suburbs.

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There were smartphone apps that allowed him to search for businesses that specialized in certain things, such as apartments or housing. He finally decided on a single family home and started wondering what to wear.

‘This is the house that I am going to live in so why should I change myself?’

Tae-hyuk wore his usual clothes and went to visit the real estate agent. The agent in his 50s was watching TV with a sleepy expression.

“Welcome. Have you come to see the house?”

The agent studied Tae-hyuk before making a listless expression.

At best, he was a freshman who just entered university. He was wearing a leather jacket and his hair wasn't even trimmed properly. His body was wet with sweat, like he had been running. Maybe he came to look for a room.

“Ah, yes. I wanted to look at what was on sale.”

“Hrmm. I'm sorry but I don't think we have any guest rooms suitable for you. The cheapest one is an officetel that requires a basic security deposit of three million and monthly rent is 1.2 million.”

His words meant to leave now. However, Tae-hyuk shook his head and said,

“I came to see about buying a place, not renting.”

“B-Buying?”

“I was wondering if there was a suitable single family home. There should be a lot of rooms. It doesn't matter if it is new or not. But there should be a small garden.”

“Ha, ha, ha... Guest-nim... You seem to be mistaken about something. Such a house is at least one billion won...”

“I have that much.”

“Huh?”

The agent’s eyes widened. This guy had one billion won? The agent turned red and he thought about calling the police.

“Are you joking right now? This is obstructing my business...”

Tae-hyuk’s eyes narrowed as he watched the agent. It seemed like he would have to take out his bankbook and show his balance for things to go smoothly.

It was at that moment. Two guests entered through the half open door. It was a young woman with colourful makeup and a man who seemed to be in his late 40s. The two of them were stuck close together like they were dating.

No matter how he looked, it seemed like an affair. The atmosphere of the agent changed as the couple entered.

“Oh, Boss-nim is here! I have found a house that fits your requirements.”

The middle-aged man chuckled and replied,

“Really? Is it was two-storey house with lots of rooms and a yard? I thought I would buy one due to the redevelopment happening nearby. We need a house to live in.”

A fresh smile appeared on the agent's face. The real estate agent would receive a percentage of the sales price as a commission fee. Selling a house was much better than renting one.

“Please sit here and look at the catalogue. I'll go and get you some tea.”

The middle-aged man started talking business with the agent.

“It is cheaper than the market price in a nearby area. In this location, a house for one billion won is cheap.”

Coincidentally, the house he was looking for had the same specs that Tae-hyuk was interested in. Tae-hyuk's eyes narrowed as he stared at the couple.

‘If you want to live, then get out quickly.’

However, the couple ignored him.

“Hrmm... It seems a bit more expensive than I thought....”

“What, Oppa. Buy me a house~”

“No, not that one. The price is a little...”

It seemed like the price was a little expensive just for an affair.

The two people started to argue for a while.

“Argh! Annoying! By the way, who is the person who keeps looking at us?”

“That reminds me, he was here from the beginning.”

Then the agent said with embarrassment,

“Ah, no. I’ll get rid of him straight away.”

The agent approached Tae-hyuk and waved his hand like he was shooing away a fly.

“I have an important deal to take care of, so please come see me about the house next time.”

Tae-hyuk made an absurd expression. The house that the couple was buying. Tae-hyuk had enough money to buy two or three of them if he wanted, yet he was being treated as a troublesome fly?

“What? That person came to see you about a house?”

“Ah, yes. It seems like he wants to buy a small house.”

“Haha! Is it a rooftop house? By the way, I truly don’t know how people can live in that. I would die if I needed to live in a rooftop

house. Huh? Right Oppa?”

“Okay, okay. Oppa believes you.”

“.....”

All expression disappeared from Tae-hyuk’s face as he listened to the conversation between the couple and the agent. His family had lived in a rented semi-basement room for years.

‘Well... What a disagreeable couple. Should I just take them out quietly? Then I will buy that property. It is a good idea.’

He touched the Tokarev TT-33 pistol that was hidden on his body. He had obtained it from the mafia members who attacked Caterina. It had been really useful in the meantime.

Tae-hyuk heard the whisperings of the couple.

“But are we going to live in the same neighbourhood as a person like that? It is disgusting...”

“Aish, surely not. This is an expensive area. Don’t worry.”

His grip on the gun tightened. He instantly started planning the crime in his head. The opponents knew his face. Therefore, he needed to get rid of everyone here. After all, the dead couldn’t talk. This place had CCTV but it wasn’t on an external server. If he

knew the exact location then it wouldn't be that difficult...

-The most important thing that Mother left isn't this Rosario."

Pajik!

At that moment, he felt like something was breaking on his face and there was a strange pain.

His wildly beating heart calmed down.

'Eh? I thought I heard something strange just now. Was I mistaken? Um... Didn't I come here for Noona's gift? There is no need to do such annoying things. First, let me ask what gift Noona would like to receive. Then I can buy them a house if it isn't enough.'

Tae-hyuk let go of the pistol and quietly left the rest estate business. The couple looked after him and muttered,

"Aigoo. An empty-headed fellow like that. Boss-nim. Don't rent a house to someone like that in this neighbourhood. It will bring the quality down."

"Haha, of course. Anyway, I doubt he would have the ability to obtain any of the properties. He will probably go to the slums."

"Don't you think the quality of the person living there is



important to increase the value of the house? Then let's go see this property."

"Yes. Oppa, let's go see the room."

"Ah, yep! I will go start the car. Boss-nim, please be at ease."

The agent and couple laughed happily without realizing that they had almost died.

## Chapter 158 – Seo Ha-ran's Wish #2

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His sister was waiting for him as he opened the front door. Ha-ran waved her hands with a strange look.

“Wow, I just sent you a message, but you came so quickly!”

“Eh? Message?”

“Yes, I wanted to buy clothes you clothes for my wedding. Didn't you come running after seeing it?”

Tae-hyuk groaned.

It was just before the wedding. Even though she was surely busy... Was his sister worried about his clothing now? She seriously wanted to talk about this.

She had no one to help with the wedding plans, so she had to do everything herself. Her dark circles reminded him of An Eun-young in her prime studying days. Even so, she was beautiful. She was like a flower that had just fully bloomed.

Ha-ran had started studying at the Wolsang Institute not long ago. She wasn't even an intern yet, but her face was filled with hope.

“I'm still a student so I can wear my uniform. So don't worry

about it.”

A small smile appeared on Ha-ran’s face.

“My Tae-hyuk is all grown up. I knew you would say that. But in this situation, I want to buy you some clothes as thanks.”

“Don’t you have to do more wedding invitations? It looks like there are a lot of pamphlets in the living room. It is hard to do alone, so shall I help you?”

“Of course! This is important too! But first, shopping for Tae-hyuk’s clothes! ...In fact, I feel really sorry that you are wearing the same clothes every day. Oh look at this!”

Seo Ha-ran pulled out a folded envelope from her pocket. She showed him the contents with a cheerful expression.

“I saved this to buy Tae-hyuk’s clothing. Let’s find something stylish.”

10,000 won bills were crammed inside. There were around 50 of them?

At that moment, Tae-hyuk felt a lump in his throat. In the meantime, he had hidden the fact that he made a huge amount of money from his crime skills. He decided to reveal it after changing the future completely. He could use the excuse of winning the lottery or receiving a blank inheritance. If he used the crime skills

then he could make a plausible lie.

Until then, he lived sparingly. In such a situation, Ha-ran had collected 500,000 won.

‘...This is obviously something she collected by living sparingly.’

Tae-hyuk licked his dry lips and asked.

“Noona, if we were rich then what would you like to have?”

“H-Huh?”

“You told me that you wanted to live in a two-story house with a garden while we were watching a drama. That is good. Or do you want something else? Or maybe a wish that you want to fulfill?”

Tae-hyuk decided to confess the day before her wedding that he was rich by showing her the bankbooks. The fight with Mister Park was over so the timing was good.

However, Ha-ran suddenly hugged Tae-hyuk with red eyes.

“My wish? Tae-hyuk. Noona only has one wish...”

“So that wish...”

“W-Why are you asking? I’m embarrassed.”

“I just want to hear it.”

Ha-ran took a deep breath and said,

“Yes, my wish... It is to see you and Tae-min living well.”

“...Is that it?”

“Yes. The end.”

Ha-ran closed her eyes and opened her mouth like it was time to confess something.

“Mother and Father... they died in an accident... I was always anxious. I confidently said that I would be your parents instead... I always wondered if I was doing well...”

Ttiring.

[The Forgery skill has found an intense image.]

At that moment, an image appeared in Tae-hyuk’s mind. A scene from his childhood that he had forgotten.

Tae-hyuk's eyes shook wildly. It couldn't be...

Did that actually happened?

The scene on the Demon Revealing Mirror was of the accident. A truck carrying steel pipes slammed into a car after a sudden stop. The person sitting in the driver's seat and the passenger seat died instantly. Only the three children sitting in the backseat managed to survive.

It was a miracle since some of the steel pipes penetrated the car. A girl in a school uniform threw herself around two elementary school students. There was a thick pipe in her stomach and blood was flowing down. Despite that, she smiled at her brothers.

'It's okay.

I will protect you, so rest assured—.'

'Ugh... W-What...?'

Tae-hyuk swallowed his saliva. Why was the scene so familiar? It was like he saw it directly in front of him.

The facts overlapped in Tae-hyuk's mind. Ha-ran never went to the swimming pool after the death of their parents.

Ha-ran whispered to Tae-hyuk,

“I want Tae-hyuk and Tae-min to live better lives than before...  
As if that accident never occurred...”

“...Noona. I’m sorry to say this all of a sudden. Can you show me  
your belly?”

Ha-ran blushed and asked,

“W-What are you saying?”

“There is something I would like to check.”

“.....”

Ha-ran was very embarrassed by his sudden request.

“Did you remember that time?”

“...Maybe.”

Ha-ran struggled for a moment in silence. Then she nodded.

“Yes. I understand. Instead, you must absolutely keep it a secret  
from Tae-min.”

Ha-ran carefully lifted the shirt she was wearing, exposing her belly. A smooth belly without any fat appeared. However, there was a fierce scar on Ha-ran's lower abdomen.

“Hehe... Ugly isn't it?”

Yes. It was there.

Pajik. Pajjik.

Tae-hyuk realized how much Ha-ran had sacrificed for her siblings. She threw away her precious life to save her brother during the accident. How could he have ever forgotten such an important thing?

His head hurt. At the same time, his ears heard the sound of something breaking.

Ahh, yes. He was alive because his sister saved him.

“Eh? T-Tae-hyuk?”

Tae-hyuk literally ran towards the bathroom. He couldn't stay any longer. Tears constantly flowed from both eyes.

Did Kang-suk know this fact? He couldn't not know. His sister didn't have the guts to hide such an important fact. Despite that,



they were getting married. Kang-suk really was a good person.

Tae-hyuk wanted to run up to Ha-ran right now and say.

‘I’m sorry Noona.

And—.

...Thank you.’

It was at that moment.

Pajijijijik—!

Tae-hyuk realized that something on his face was shattering. He slowly raised his head and looked at the mirror in front of him. There was something really strange.

A blank face with no emotions stared back at him. Then half of it broke and fell off of his face. Mask...?

“...What, since when was I wearing this type of thing?”

He couldn’t understand the situation. Tae-hyuk reached up and peeled off the half mask.

“.....!!!”

This...

The Phantom mask. Tae-hyuk made a shocked expression as the mask smiled. Then a voice was heard, like a hallucination.

–Ah, I was discovered.

---

Waaaack!

Tae-hyuk covered his mouth to block the scream that wanted to emerge. Ha-ran was outside the bathroom. He didn't want to unnecessarily worry her.

‘What is this?!’

Tae-hyuk tossed the mask to the ground and started stepping on it. It turned into white particles and disappeared.

“D-Don't tell me that until now... Ugh...!”

In the end, he couldn't endure it and dunked his head over the sink. He hadn't eaten anything, so only yellow gastric juices were vomited out, but it was better than nothing. After a few minutes, he felt the nausea fading away.

Ha-ran's concerned voice could be heard from outside.

"Tae-hyuk? What's going on?"

"All of a sudden, my stomach..."

"Ah! Y-Your stomach hurts? I'll go and buy medicine straight away!"

"...I think it will get better if I rest a little bit. Don't worry."

Tae-hyuk made an excuse to Ha-ran and sat on the bathtub. Then the illusion of people dying appeared in front of his eyes.

"I-I...killed... P-People... W-What on earth..."

When did he start to cross the line? Tae-hyuk bit his lip and desperately searched through his memories.

"...Yes. It is clearly after I upgraded to a King."

There were some signs of it when he was a Noble. The more he used the crime skills, the more numb he became to committing crimes. It felt like he became another person. It became worse after he was a King, and he easily killed others. It was like he was spellbound by something, but the memories still remained intact.

A few hours ago, he was about to kill a couple who hadn't done anything wrong.

“This, dammit! I am just like a serial killer!”

In the future, he was framed and went to prison. However, he might be punished for the sins he committed.

“But I have the crime skills... Waaaack! Y-Yes! That is the killer!”

Tae-hyuk pulled out the Demon Revealing Mirror.

“This really was a cursed object from the beginning!”

He had barely come back to his senses. But what if he started using the crime skills again?

Tae-hyuk bit his lip and muttered,

“I'm not a criminal... So now I will quit being Phantom. I will return to being the high school student Seo Tae-hyuk, Ha-ran noona's little brother.”

He couldn't throw away the Demon Revealing Mirror but he decided not to use the sinister crime skills.

Woong!

Woong woong!

Woong woong woong!

The Demon Revealing Mirror started to vibrate.

“What? Do you think I will be convinced by that? I’m not going to use the crime skills. So just disappear.”

At that moment, a message appeared on the screen of the Demon Revealing Mirror.

[It is possible to become the God of Crime by obtaining one million affinity points.]

The Demon Revealing Mirror showed him the condition required to upgrade his rank.

“Are you saying that you want me to kill one million people?”

He obtained affinity points by changing the fate of others. There was a simple way to do this. It was to kill someone who should’ve lived.

“Damn! I guess you laughed when I was possessed by you!”

Tae-hyuk felt terrible.

“...Yes. I won’t use the crime skills. Then I’ll be able to maintain my sanity.”

Anyway, the main case was over.

Woong! Woong woong! Woong woong woong!

As if trying to persuade him, the Demon Revealing Mirror kept on raising notification windows in front of Tae-hyuk’s eyes.

“You won’t deceive me!”

Tae-hyuk declared firmly. In the future, it was necessary to protect his important people without using the crime skills. There was only one way to do that.

He left the bathroom and headed to the kitchen where Ha-ran was cooking.

“Noona.”

“Huh? Yes? Oh, I’m making porridge because your stomach hurts. Just wait a little longer.”

“I’ve picked a career.”

“C-Career? Oh, the course you want to go into?”

“Yes. I’m going to being a detective like Kang-suk hyung. I will go into the police department. There is a course at S University.”

“Omo! W-Wah!”

Ha-ran grinned and clapped with delight. Her brother wanted to be a police officer. It was a wonderful job where he would protect people.

“Yes! Obviously, Kang-suk will support you.”

Ha-ran gently hugged Tae-hyuk.

Yes, this was surely right. The reason he chose a police officer was simple. Tae-hyuk still remembered the future. Most of the information was about crimes. As long as he had those memories, there was a possibility of being dragged into incidents.

Could he solve those without using the crime skills? However, a police officer was different. He could officially fight against crime.

As he thought this, his anxious mind calmed down. Now there was nothing...

The next day, Ha-ran went missing.



# Chapter 159 – God Of Crime #1

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Three days had passed by since Seo Ha-ran first went missing.

Cho Kang-suk, who wanted to find her more than anyone else, was nervously pacing around the room. His motto as a detective was that he should jump in directly to solve the case. However, he was forced to be a bystander in this case. The investigation was slow and frustrating.

“Damn! It is too much to exclude me from the investigation!”

However, he didn’t have the authority to overturn the decision. He was glad that a large-scale investigation was being held in regards to the disappearance.

“Huu... Although many people go missing in this country...”

He never thought his family would fall victim to it. Fortunately, Kang-suk had a network of people whom he could trust with the investigation.

Kang-suk took out his smartphone and called someone. Then a voice was heard.

–Ah, Sunbae.

“...You worked hard. Did you find anything?”

–I’m sorry. We searched around the place where she was last seen but...

“Wolsang University?”

It was the place where Ha-ran was last seen. She left the house saying she had to go to the university. Then she didn’t come back.

–That... We searched so thoroughly that not even an ant could hide. But there was nothing.

“I see...”

Joo Hyun-how was a seemingly unreliable man. However, he was the most proficient investigator in this country. He was one of the few colleagues who Kang-suk could trust. But the missing person was his bride just a few days before their marriage. It was torture not being able to do anything.

Kang-suk sat down and sighed. Hyun-ho told Kang-suk in a concerned tone.

–I have mobilized all of my connections to look for her. So don’t worry too much...

“Just focus on Phantom?”

–...Well, that’s right.

Phantom no longer contacted them. However, that made the higher-ups more jumpy. In the end, they didn’t want Kang-suk away for too long in case Phantom contacted him. For a while, he could only support the other teams.

“At any rate, let me know if there are any additional clues.”

-Understood. Don’t worry. The country’s top agents are looking for her so we will find her soon.

“I hope so. Really.”

Kang-suk hung up and leaned back on his seat. He wanted to ask Phantom for help.

“Phantom... wouldn’t you be able to easily solve this case?”

The number of cases solved by Phantom appeared in Kang-suk’s mind.

He hated to admit it, but everything was great. The mysterious masked man, Phantom. What if he was in a situation like this? He would probably solve everything with a strange idea.

Kang-suk fell deep into thought.

“Yes, if it was Phantom...”

He had an order from his superiors to stay where he was.

“...I have to do this.”

Kang-suk stood up, opened the door and left. A detective writing a report outside asked with surprise,

“Eh! Detective Cho! Aren’t you supposed to wait here?”

“Hey! I have to eat to survive! I’m going to take a walk and eat a bowl of short rib soup. If I stay stuck in the corner any longer, then spider webs will cover my nose.”

“Yes, I understand. I will tell Inspector-nim that you went to eat.”

Kang-suk left the police station and put on sunglasses. Of course, it wasn’t a lie. He was going out to eat something. It was just a coincidence that the direction he was heading in was the place where Seo Ha-ran was last seen.

Yes, a coincidence.

“Well, if something goes wrong then I can write an apology.”

Kang-suk smiled playfully and started his car. Before he knew it, he had a similar atmosphere to Phantom.

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“.....”

Tae-hyuk glared at the Demon Revealing Mirror.

He had started investigating as soon as he realized that he was possessed by it. First of all, his stats, such as intelligence and stamina, remained the same. In other words, his physical abilities had actually been increased.

It was through his own efforts, rather than the Demon Revealing Mirror. Tae-hyuk confirmed the notification and rose from his spot.

“I wished I didn’t have to use the crime skills... Hu, dammit. Right now, I should be refraining from trying to use it as much as possible...”

Kang-suk’s current location was on the screen of his smartphone. The fact that he was moving meant the police hadn’t found any clues to Seo Ha-ran’s disappearance.

“I was hoping that the police would find her.”

Tae-hyuk pulled out the opera mask and put it on his face. He

could figure out Kang-suk's movements without the crime skills.

First of all, he activated Spying to check on his sister's condition. It reduced a lot of his stamina, so he was exhausted. However, she was alive.

“Ugh...”

A moan emerged from his Tae-hyuk's mouth. He had only used the crime skill for one second, yet his desperate need to murder someone increased. If this continued, then he would become the psychopathic murderer once again.

Jjak!

After slapping his cheeks, he felt his sanity returning.

“...Yes, I should be able to endure this much.”

His theory was that the skills he learned in the early days, such as Spying and Robbery, were slow to pollute his mind.

“The place where my sister was last seen...”

He turned on the map application and headed to the location he loaded in advance. There was a bus stop not far from the Wolsang Institute. It was late in the afternoon so no one was passing by.

Tae-hyuk sighed slowly.

He wanted to stop using his crime skills but he needed to find his sister as quickly as possible. He took out a small notebook and pen, then he triggered a crime skill.

“Forgery!”

[The Forgery skill has found an intense image.]

“.....!”

Blurry images appeared in front of Tae-hyuk like a broken projector.

‘There are definitely traces of a crime here... There was something here.’

He gulped and looked at the video of the kidnapping. It was noon judging by the sun floating directly overhead. He couldn’t see the exact date because he was just watching a video. The bus arrived at the stop, a woman stepping down from the vehicle.

It was Ha-ran wearing a white dress. A man sitting at the bus stop got up. Did they make a promise in advance to meet?

Tae-hyuk moved his gaze to try and see the man's face. However, the visibility was fixed, so Tae-hyuk could only see his back.

‘I can't see his face because his cap is covering his face too deeply!’

Ha-ran bowed politely to the man. She seemed to know him quite well.

Shortly after this, Seo Ha-ran went missing. It was very likely that this man was the culprit.

‘Now, just turn a little and show me your face. Yes? Just a little... Ah, why is it suddenly on the other side?’

He could only see the intense image engraved on this spot. He couldn't affect it. Even though he knew this, he couldn't stop watching.

It was at that moment. The atmosphere of Seo Ha-ran and the man changed. The man suddenly took off his hat and Seo Ha-ran looked astonished. Then the man rushed towards Seo Ha-ran.

“T-T-That bastard!”

Tae-hyuk's face filled with anger. The man pulled something out from his pocket and slammed it over Seo Ha-ran's mouth. Seo Ha-ran's body twisted desperately as she tried to escape.



This was just a recorded video. He calmed his trembling hands and focused on seeing the opponent's face.

“He is the criminal. Yes, who are you? Look this way.”

Tae-hyuk bit his lip and waited for the man to move. The man put Ha-ran in a suitcase and turned around with light footsteps.

“.....!”

Tae-hyuk couldn't say anything.

The face was deformed, like a monster. It was painted over with white paint. Only the lips were a bright red that looked like blood..

Tae-hyuk knew who that person was.

“Clown... Why is he coming out already...?”

The most dangerous criminal on the blacklist. The kidnapping of Ha-ran was due to the mad scientist, the Clown. According to Tae-hyuk's memories of the future, the Clown didn't appear for three more years.

Then why? Why?

Tae-hyuk's body trembled.

It was simple. It was because he changed history, no, destiny, with his own hands.

---

“Heok...heook...heok!”

Go Ah-tae felt like his face was being baked on a hot plate. He was going to die if this continued! He forced himself to live.

Chiiiik!

His arms felt like they were frying.

“Kkuck... Keuok...”

Every time he breathed, it felt like he was on fire. Go Ah-tae slowly looked around.

He was burning all over. He wondered why he was in such a place.

The Wolsang Institute, which he directed, was in a chronic deficit. He had no choice but to cooperate with another institute to complete the ‘Core Drive’ that he named himself. It was the Taesung Institute of Physics and Chemistry that had the greatest

wealth in the country.

Director Jang Ik-sam welcomed Go Ah-tae and said he would help with his research. Both of them were rivals from the same university. One specialized in chemistry while the other specialized in physics. Their area of specialty was different, but their enthusiasm for research was unmatched by anyone else.

Thus, the two institutes joined together to proceed with the research project. Today, he came to support the project at the Taesung institute, but the atmosphere was strange. Jang Ik-sam took Go Ah-tae down to the basement where there was a strange scent. Once he recovered his spirit, he was here.

“There is a computer...”

Go Ah-tae took the computer hard disk from the half burned Jang Ik-sam and left the institute. He was able to survive because he had fainted in a secret space in a corner of the room.

“K-Kiik! W-What? E-Everybody is dead. Kikikik...”

Why did laughter keep on bursting out? Was something broken due to the impact of the accident? Or maybe it was because Jang Ik-sam accidentally had him swallow the Psychotropic Incense.

Go Ah-tae was clearly broken. He walked back to his research laboratory.

“Hihihit! First of all, I need to check what is on the hard disk!”

There were a few locks but he could easily solve it. The hard disk contained information about the Psychotropic Incense and Mister Park’s plot to use it to turn humans into puppets. He couldn’t resist laughing.

“Kikikiki! These people were doing something very interesting! It would’ve been more fun if they told me sooner!”

Go Ah-tae realized that his body’s status was unusual and that he was close to dying. He entered the cell regenerator that was being studied in the next building. He didn’t know the side effects, but he needed to survive first.

“Hihit! Yihihihhi!”

If this failed, then he would die. However, the laughter didn’t stop.

“Hehehehehet!”

He entered the cell regenerator that looked like a big aquarium tank. Then he pressed the button.

One day passed by. His burnt and charred skin regenerated to some extent.

“Kikikiki! I fortunately lived.”

However, he couldn't do anything about the burns that distorted his face. It was too ugly to leave like this. He recalled that he still had the tools used to dress as a clown for a Halloween party last year in the warehouse. He used makeup to cover his face to a certain extent.

“Maybe somebody blew up the Taesung institute to get rid of the Psychotropic Incense, but I'm sorry.”

Go Ah-tae laughed with his distorted face.

“I know how to make it. Yihihihihit!”

When he went to the institute, he saw his people working hard.

“Kyaaaaak!”

“D-Director-nim?”

“This appearance...”

Go Ah-tae sprinkled a few bottles of the Psychotropic Incense that he took from the Taesung Institute in here.

Chiiiik!

This would make the researchers his faithful slaves who would cut their own necks if he asked.

“D-Director G-Go Ah-tae... W-What are you...?”

What was with this person? The Psychotropic Incense didn't work on him? Maybe he had an unusual constitution. There was one researcher who didn't fall slave to the Psychotropic Incense.

“I have to dispose of defective products. Yihihihit!”

Go Ah-tae walked over to the researcher with an axe he found from somewhere. Then he smiled brightly.

“Go Ah-tae. I am the Clown.”

“C-Clown...?”

He slammed the axe down on the other person's head.

Hwaaaaack!

Blood splattered the white coat that he was wearing.

“Yihihihit!”

Go Ah-tae... No, the Clown laughed.

Then he muttered in a low voice,

“So what should I do now?”

# Chapter 160 – God Of Crime #2

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The Clown leaned back in his chair and made a sad expression. He inspected the researchers addicted to the Psychotropic Incense. As a trial, he gave one of them an order to commit suicide.

“Kuweeeeek!”

The faithful slave stabbed his belly.

However, there was a fatal drawback to the Psychotropic Incense. It was okay for simple manual labour. But the project required doing tasks with a little more difficulty. It was hard to expect a lot from the zombies.

“I can’t use these things.”

At most, he could use them as security guards. The Clown moved his fingers and some of the researchers brought him the Psychotropic Incense.

“Kuweeeoooh...”

“Kilkil, I should use a more moderate amount of Psychotropic Incense the next time I need subordinates since these have become defective products that can’t even speak properly.”

There were almost 100 bottles of Psychotropic Incense in the box.



He could create thousands of slaves.

“It is possible to proceed with the Core Drive project that was frozen...! What absurd theory? If my research succeeds, then it will be an innovation that will change human life itself! Uhahahahat!”

In Greek mythology, Prometheus stole the fire of the gods and gave it to humans. It completely changed the lives of the humans who were living a primitive life. What about electricity, or the telephone? They were literally revolutionary.

He didn't need to go that far. It was easy to think about how much the Internet and smartphones had enriched human lives. With one single click, they could access anywhere in the world, at any time they wanted. 100 years ago, it would've been called a miracle of the gods.

“...I will create an infinite energy called ‘Core Drive’! It will bring a new prosperity to humans! Uha, uhahahat!”

If he did it, wouldn't the academics who ignored him look at him with astonished faces? His heart beat wildly just thinking about it. The Clown touched his chin and started thinking.

“Kuook. I require the help of an assistant.”

His eyes rolled as he went through all the possibilities. It couldn't be anyone addicted to the incense.

“The right person... Ah!”

The face of a freshman entered the Clown’s mind. She was quite bright and he could teach her what was required to be an assistant.

The Clown called a subordinate over. He was one that had a certain degree of consciousness and could slightly communicate.

“Where is Seo Ha-ran right now?”

“T-That...not, h-here...”

“So where is she?!”

“Gett-ing, read-y, wedding, home.”

“Ohuhuhu, that’s right.

Come to think of it, he remembered hearing something like that. The Clown frowned.

“Hrmm.”

It felt like there was a fog around his head.

Some of his memories were hazy.

“Well, it doesn’t matter. These are still the same! Yihihit!”

He drummed his fingers against the keyboard in a familiar manner and the machines in the laboratory started moving. The Core Drive project was still fresh in his mind. It seemed like he could start his research right now.

“I need research funds since the Core Drive doesn’t have enough material. Ah, before that.”

The Clown beckoned for a subordinate to hand him his phone and entered in a number.

“Ah, Ha-ran? Hello, Clown... No, it is Go Ah-tae. I’m sorry if you’re busy, but I have something important to discuss with you. Can we talk for 10 minutes? No, I’ll pick you up. You need to come here... Ah, I really appreciate it! Then I will meet you at the bus stop.”

The Clown hung up and laughed. He believed that everything he was doing was essential for the development of mankind.

“Hihihi! Then let’s open the circus stage.”

A few days passed by.

An article appeared on the Internet about a group of clowns

attacking people. And at the same time, Seo Tae-hyuk realized why the Clown was born three years earlier than planned.

---

Tae-hyuk felt dizzy.

He couldn't stop his trembling hands.

“What is this...”

The Forgery skill showed the Clown dressed in a white coat. His eyes were familiar. He had gone with his sister to the institute. Then he met a middle-aged man called Go Ah-tae.

“Go Ah-tae... Kwang-tae, no, Clown? What, he was the clown?”  
(Wordplay since clown in Korean =Kwangdae)

Why hadn't he realized such a simple pun? The Clown that Tae-hyuk met in prison had a bizarre appearance. His whole body was covered in burns, and he wore clown makeup like he was trying to hid it.

The prison turned a blind eye to a certain extent. If he wasn't wearing his clown makeup, then the other prisoners would be too disgusted. It was no wonder that his nickname became the Clown.

“I thought he was just called the Clown due to how he looked, but his name was actually the cause.”

Tae-hyuk recalled everything he knew about the Clown. He was in an accident and suffered massive burns to his body. The impact damaged his pituitary gland that controlled reasoning and self-control, things that were essential for a normal social life. He literally became a monster that acted on instincts.

“In the process of changing the future, I hastened the Clown’s accident by three years. Wait a minute, that means...”

Tae-hyuk’s face turned white. There was a place that his mind went to.

“Surely the Clown wasn’t at Taesung Institute?”

He had blown up that place. It was the only explosive severe enough to cause burns that occurred recently. It was enough damage to blow away the whole building. He didn’t think that anyone could survive that.

“The Clown was injured in an accident when he worked at a research institute. Then the institute is...”

It was likely the Taesung institute that was blown up a week ago. Tae-hyuk bit his lip.

If Go Ah-tae, the Clown, was related to Taesung Institute...

It was likely that Tae-hyuk had turned Go Ah-tae into the Clown. At the same time, the possibility existed that he just became the Clown earlier than expected. No matter what it was, the worst result happened..

As a result, the Clown kidnapped Seo Ha-ran.

“Damn, I changed history...”

Originally, he was going to find clues and give Kang-suk’s hints to solve the case. However, he couldn’t stay still now that fate had started to distort this way.

“Wasn’t the Clown’s purpose to continue his research?”

Tae-hyuk knew that the project could never succeed.

“So something might’ve appeared on the news.”

A few strange articles stood out.

“...People dressed as clowns are attacking citizens.”

Something was strange.

Tae-hyuk clearly remembered that the Clown worked alone in the future. He was a scientist who lived without acknowledging his

failure until the end. There was no one who could sympathize with such madness.

“Thanks to acting alone, he was easily caught by the police despite his great abilities.”

But how did he have subordinates now? What created such a difference?

First of all, he needed to understand the enemy's power.

---

-...A bunch of people dressed as clowns are rioting...

Tae-hyuk's eyes shone as he heard the words from the police radio that he stole. He was planning to use Transformation, but decided to stop. He needed to stop relying so much on the crime skills.

“Well, this much is enough.”

He bought a baseball cap from a nearby store and covered his face. He was just going to watch from a distance anyway. It was the appearance of a slightly bad-looking high school student. Nobody would be suspicious.

“Kyaaaaak!”

“W-What are those people?”

“Are they completely crazy?”

A group of people burst out of the department store. Cracking sounds could be heard from inside the building. An old man came running up to Tae-hyuk and cried out,

“Student! Call the police and get out of here! Crazy people are rioting in there!”

Tae-hyuk replied blankly,

“Huh? Crazy people?”

“Yes! They are dressed up like clowns! Aaaaack!”

The clowns smashed the department store door and came out. The old man ran away as soon as he saw them. Tae-hyuk looked inside and saw people who looked like security guards lying on the floor with blood coming from their heads.

“Kuweeeoooh!”

“Osu! Osu!”



“Kuaah! Kuaaack!”

They let out strange yells and had bloodshot eyes.

They would have no problems appearing as the villains of a horror movie right now. Tae-hyuk examined the clowns. Their appearances were strangely familiar.

“What? Are they addicted to the Psychotropic Incense?”

It was the thing that Mister Park used. Obviously it had burned with the institute, but how could so many people be affected by the Psychotropic Incense?

Tae-hyuk heard the police sirens and hid himself in an alley. It would be complicated if he was discovered by the police. He pressed himself as close to the wall as possible and started organizing the situation.

‘The emergence of the Clown three years earlier... And unlike the future, he has followers. Was there some Psychotropic Incense left?’

The Clown had appeared three years earlier and also had the Psychotropic Incense as a weapon. Tae-hyuk lightly used Spying and determined the number of clowns in the department store.

‘30... No, it is over 40. Isn’t that almost like the mafia?’

The more terrifying thing was that he could use the Psychotropic Incense to increase that number.

‘The Clown has subordinates? This balance isn’t right!’

Tae-hyuk bit his lip.

The Clown was armed with future technology not available to the public, and now he had the clowns that robbed the department store. They held things like iron pipes or baseball bats.

The Clown couldn’t be allowed access to another research institute. What would happen if he armed his subordinates with the technology? A power incomparable to the mafia would be born. There would be clowns who could dissolve a steel rail or be armed with things like Machina.

“...Hell.”

Seo Ha-ran had been kidnapped by such a terrible person. Tae-hyuk’s body trembled.

“In the end, I have to appear as Phantom.”

Tae-hyuk’s mouth distorted.

This was the last time. It was over if he just handled the Clown.

He would just his crime skills just this once.

“Then it is the co-performance of the Clown and Phantom. Let’s do a spectacular retirement stage.”

Tae-hyuk headed for a deserted hideout. He started to prepare to fight the Clown.

# Chapter 161 – God Of Crime #3

---

He already checked that the Shooting Spree skill could be used with taser guns.

‘The problem is the output.’

Once he fired a few shots, all of the stored electricity would be exhausted. There would surely be a lot of clowns waiting in the Clown’s headquarters. In order to fight them, he had to solve the problem of his power shortage.

‘Yes, connect it to Machina’s drive...’

Tae-hyuk carried a big climbing bag. They weren’t visible, but steel parts were stored inside. It contained the mechanical arm Machina. He could connect it directly to a power supply and treat it like his own arm.

It would be better if he could replace his own arm, but he decided to be satisfied with his much. The risk of using Body Modification was too great.

‘Let’s test it out.’

Tae-hyuk focused and moved Machina.

Kkikikikik!

The machine arm protruded from the backpack and smashed the bricks placed in front of it. Tremendous havoc! It was just a prototype, but he could still use it as a weapon.

“Science and technology has developed much more than the public thinks.”

These advanced technologies were being studied by many laboratories in the country. This was what the Clown was aiming for. The pierrots were running around and getting people’s attention. The Clown was preparing to rob the research institutes. Tae-hyuk planned to rescue Ha-ran while the Clown was distracted by that.

“After that, I can sell the name of Phantom.”

The time limit to move Machina was 120 minutes. Furthermore, shooting the taser guns would consume energy as well. After entering the institute, he had to move as quickly as possible. He checked the time and saw that it was currently 8 p.m. In order to infiltrate a place, it needed to be dark so that the opponent’s visibility was restricted.

“...I still have bombs and ammunition for a frontal breakthrough.”

However, there was a chance he would become caught by the Demon Revealing Mirror again. In addition, Seo Ha-ran was a hostage so he needed to make sure she wasn’t in danger. The place

where the Clown was based was a secluded area of the research institute.

Tae-hyuk had been here once with Ha-ran so it wasn't hard to find the way. At that moment, he heard voices as a group of men and women walked out of a building at Wolsang University.

“Are you sure you asked for proxy attendance?”

“Of course! Anyway, the professors of this faculty doesn't even take attendance properly!”

“Yes... The other day, a man was imitating a woman.”

“Fufufufufu! Isn't that amazing? That is a bit much...”

They seemed like people attending night classes at the university. They mistook Tae-hyuk for someone attending the same university. They waved and greeted him as they walked by.

“Eh? Are you going to class? I think it's already started, so you should run.”

The group laughed and disappeared into the darkness. Tae-hyuk shrugged and turned to go down a path. Then there was the familiar sound of a notification.

Ttiring.

[Crime Skill: Proxy Attendance has been learned.]

“...W-What? I can freely skip school if I have this?”

It seemed useless. No, he was already doing well without the help of the crime skills. After becoming a King, it seemed he could learn the skill just by witnessing a crime scene.

“When I think about it, having someone attend class for you is a crime as well.”

It felt cute since he had only learned bloody things for a while. Tae-hyuk licked his lips.

Not long ago, he would've used Transformation and have the screen of the Demon Revealing Mirror in the air. But that play was over now.

He firmly made up his mind and headed towards the Clown as naturally as possible. As he got closer, the number of people around started to decrease. Then they completely disappeared. It felt like he had been thrown into a completely different world.

“...I should probably use Spying.”

He didn't want to, but he had to use the crime skill to figure out the best route of infiltration. From now on, it was a race against time. Ha-ran would be in danger if he didn't break through the enemy as quickly as possible.

Grunt.

He climbed up a tree and arrived at a window on the second floor. He placed tape on the glass and smashed it with his elbow.

Kwajik!

There was the sound of something breaking and Tae-hyuk carefully crawled into the building.

Kuweeeeooh!

The wails of the mad could be heard from somewhere.

---

“Kuk, kuruk, kueeok...”

The pierrots patrolled the dark corridors.

It was like a zombie in a zombie movie.



Tae-hyuk moved as carefully as possible.

‘How badly did they get addicted to the Psychotropic Incense that they are acting like this?’

They weren’t humans anymore. Their disgusting appearance was enough to cause nausea. Fortunately, it seemed like they would be able to return to normal if they received proper treatment.

“Uw...uweeeek!”

Tae-hyuk hid behind a wall and looked at the movements of the clowns. Their movements had three things in common.

‘First of all, their sense of smell and hearing is very sensitive. They even react to the sound of the wind. In comparison, their eyesight is relatively bad. Aren’t they completely like zombies...?’

However, they were different from the ones in the movies.

They moved according to the orders of the person who gave them the Psychotropic Incense. He checked the map created by Spying and saw a route leading underground. Then the Demon Revealing Mirror started to vibrate.

[Kill the security guards and defeat the ‘Clown’!]

Tae-hyuk spat on the floor as he saw the message.

“Che! You shut up.”

He ignored the messages that continued to pop up and placed the map in a corner.

“First of all, if I handle eight people, then I can get to where Clown is.”

There were approximately 30 pierrots in the building. The equipment he had to fight them was poor.

Tae-hyuk licked his lips and moved.

First, he slowly approached the pierrot guarding the corridor. He held his breath so the opponent didn't notice Tae-hyuk approaching.

‘The iron pipe will be fine.’

He quietly activated the Violence skill and the pipe appeared in his hand. He swung it and hit the back of the c's head.

Kwaduk!

“Kihehehehehe!”

There was a loud scream as the pierrot fell to the ground.

“This...”

The scream of the pierrot was louder than he thought. Any guards who heard it would come flocking.

“Eh? Fortunately, it seems okay.”

The sound was loud enough to be heard on the other floors, yet there was no reaction from the pierrots.

“Um...perhaps they don't respond to each other's voices?”

They stood still despite the mysterious shriek. If no restraints were placed on the pierrots, they would probably attempt to catch each other. It seemed like orders were given to prevent such a situation.

Tae-hyuk clicked his tongue.

“Then this isn't secure at all. Tsk tsk. This is why the world would collapse if you use the wrong outsourcing...”

After placing the collapsed clown on the floor, he headed towards

his next goal. There were pierrots around, so he couldn't do down the stairs to the underground laboratory.

He had to use the private passage in a corner of the building. Of course, the stairs that led to it were guarded by three pierrots.

“First, I need to send them elsewhere.”

He could handle one of them silently, but taking down three of them was a harder task. Tae-hyuk smiled as he suddenly came up with a good idea. He immediately checked the contents of a trash can and he was able to find the item he wanted.

‘It would be confusing if this wasn't present in a laboratory.’

It was an empty bottle of a drink that contained plenty of caffeine and taurine. It was almost piled up in boxes.

‘This is a suitable place...’

Tae-hyuk grabbed some of it and threw it at an area that the pierrots couldn't see.

Bakak!

The pierrots turned around at the sound of the bottle breaking.

“B-Break in, i-intruder, kuhik, kuk!”

“I, go, sound...”

“Hukik! Hugeuk!”

The three pierrots guarding the entrance to the passage immediately ran towards where the sound was heard. Usually, one person would go to look while the others watching carefully. However, the pierrots were affected by the Psychotropic Incense, and could only follow simple commands. Making a rational judgment was impossible.

‘Move through this gap!’

Tae-hyuk ran down the staircase while there were no guards.

Tung tung tung!

The sound of the iron stairs shaking was quite loud. However, he needed to pass through this area quickly.

‘If I make a mistake then he might notice. I have to strike before that!’

There was a pierrot guarding the exit of the stairs. His movements were unsteady like he was distracted by something, but the face was covered in white powder and he was half-dressed

in rags. He was wearing a bulletproof helmet on his head.

‘What type of zombie...’

He couldn’t strike the zombie on the back of the head to knock him unconscious.

“...Come to think of it, they are people, not zombies.”

Tae-hyuk suppressed his laugh and choked the clown from behind with his iron pipe.

“.....!”

Cut off the blood flow to the brain was a basic way to make the opponent lost consciousness.

“Kihik! Kuhuk! Keook...”

The pierrot raised his arms and struggled a few times. If Tae-hyuk held it too long, then the person might not wake up forever, so he would end it here.

“Isn’t this too easy?’

The best weapon Tae-hyuk learned after becoming a Noble was the Shooting Spree skill. Once he activated it, the two attributes of

Bullet Time and the bullet lines were automatically applied. His mind accelerated and he could know the enemy's attack route.

Naturally he took advantage of it in a full-scale war. It was a close to invincible power. He didn't use this skill yet since he could get to his destination so easily.

A smile flashed on his face at the thought.

‘It is because I grew up properly.’

Everything required a process. The Clown right now wasn't a hardened criminal but a lunatic armed with high-tech weapons.

‘These technologies can't be bought at the open market so it will take some time to obtain. It is just weak timing for him...’

Once he went down to the basement, there were half a dozen people for a tight defense. This was the core of the institute so it was naturally protected.

“Then let's not worry about saving power!”

It was time to break through.

Tae-hyuk connected the power supply to Machina and moved.

# Chapter 162 – God Of Crime #4

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Pajijjik!

Electricity flashed every time he moved his body. If he wasn't wearing rubber clothing then it would be transferred away from him.

“I-Intruder, i-intruder!”

The pierrots holding clubs or knives rushed over.

‘After a long time, Sixth Sense!’

Then he felt like he had eyes in the back of his head. Tae-hyuk turned and fired the taser gun. It wasn't a weapon with bullets, so he didn't trigger Shooting Spree. However, the pierrots were even worse than the Nuclear Bomb members at fighting. They were also crazy, making it was easy to deal with them.

He didn't need to enter the radius of the opponent's attack. He had achieved stability and the opponents couldn't hit Tae-hyuk's body.

‘It is like a minor version of the bullet lines.’

“Hieeeeeek!”



Tae-hyuk twisted his body and attacked the pierrots.

Kkikikikik!

As if it received a signal, the machine arm protruded from the bag on his back and struck the abdomen of a pierrot.

“Kuheok!”

The person was a half-zombie due to the Psychotropic Incense, but it was an ordinary human scream.

“I can’t control the strength because it is on my back. Well, this much seems fine? I have to move without killing as much as possible...”

Then a pierrot aimed a club at his back. Tae-hyuk avoided the opponent and aimed the taser gun at him.

Pajijik, pajijik!

“Hukakakakak!”

The pierrot collapsed as the high-voltage current coursed through his body. Five pierrots went down and only one remained standing.

“Only one pierrot left! Are you going to shout?”

The opponent's eyes were still blazing. Usually in this situation, a person would step back to maintain their posture. However, the pierrot was determined to fight despite being the last person. It was to fulfill his order to defend this place.

Tae-hyuk clicked his tongue.

“Even though you only have weapons from the iron age...”

The scarier thing was that their power could be increased infinitely through the Psychotropic Incense. It was a strange thing that this didn't happen in his previous life.

The reason was that Phantom helped in the Bomber's revenge.

It was clear. Tae-hyuk had been framed for killing Mister Park and was sent to prison. And the Psychotropic Incense made by the Yakuza was ridiculously dangerous. It was something that he couldn't allow to be released in South Korea.

But as a result, a more dangerous monster was born, and Seo Haran was its offering. So...

“...I have to stop it. Since I have the memories of my previous life, I am the only one who can prevent it.”

Tae-hyuk bit his lip and looked at the remaining pierrot in the hallway. The pierrot's bloodshot eyes flashed. This was a typical symptom of Psychotropic Incense addiction. Either way, this one remaining pierrot wouldn't be able to stop him from entering the underground laboratory.

He gripped the iron pipe securely.

“—The drg has turned you into a mad dog.”

His use of the Machina and taser guns was minimal. There was still the Clown left. He needed to leave some power to deal with the Clown. The pierrot asked hesitantly and with poor articulation.

“You, identity, what?”

“Hyu~ there was someone who could speak? Does the effect of the Psychotropic Incense differ depending on your constitution?”

“...You, can't, go.”

The pierrot held an iron pipe in both hands and moved in front of Tae-hyuk. But Tae-hyuk couldn't feel the will to protect something. The pierrot was just like an animated puppet that received a command.

It felt like Tae-hyuk was looking at himself from his previous life. He was a temporary worker at a security company and was dispatched to a large corporation. He chose it because it made

money, not because it excited him. The pay was just enough for living expenses. He had to believe that he could live a better life if he worked hard. And the result...

“Sheesh. I remembered something bad.”

Tae-hyuk said before smiling. He had smashed that future with his own hands. Now he only needed to take down the Clown and save his sister, and it would all be over. His previous life couldn't be reached anymore...

Ha-ran's dream would come true.

He adjusted his iron pipe. The pierrot picked up an iron pipe rolling across the ground. It was added to his original one and now he was holding two pipes.

“I, two. You, one. I, won...all.”

“Ah? Is that so?”

Tae-hyuk bent down and swung the iron pipe at the opponent's leg.

“K-Kuwak!”

The pierrot lost his balance and fell down.

“One more shot!”

He used the gap to hit the head, making the pierrot faint. Tae-hyuk dusted off his hands and muttered,

“...This is the end of the tiresome pierrots.”

Then he suddenly crouched down on the ground. He said to the unconscious pierrot,

“You asked who I was? I am Seo Ha-ran’s brother, Seo Tae-hyuk. Well. This is the end.”

Tae-hyuk got up. He looked at the firmly closed door in front of him.

The Clown was in there.

---

The underground laboratory had a somber atmosphere.

There was a huge flask with an unknown purpose that was installed in the middle of the room. A bright red plasma was shining inside it.

Tae-hyuk recalled something similar to it. It was definitely a new technology at the Children’s Science Museum. His parents had

taken him to see it with Ha-ran and Tae-min. It was one of the few memories from his younger days.

There was someone looking at the flask. He was dressed in a white coat and had funny clown makeup on his face. His height was a little bit taller than Detective Cho Kang-suk's, but his body seemed like it was only made of bones. There was charred white hair on top of his head. The skin around his mouth was severely distorted due to burns.

It was a terrible look. Obviously, the other places on his body wouldn't be much different.

The Clown started stroking the flask like it was his beloved child.

“Kiik! Kiiiiik! Kilkil.”

Something shone in the gap between his bright red lips. Tae-hyuk ignored the Clown and looked around the laboratory.

‘There is a pierrot.’

He was waiting in a corner of the laboratory, as if he was sleeping. Pierrots were standing over a chair and Seo Ha-ran was lying on top of it. Apart from being unconscious, her body seemed fine.

‘N-Noona!’

He wanted to rush over and grab her hand to get out of here, but he couldn't do that. The pierrots nearby were holding weapons. Ha-ran could be in danger if he did anything wrong.

Tae-hyuk took the time to look inside the laboratory.

He felt something. The Clown turned his head and looked at the entrance. There was clearly nothing there, but he bowed down and greeted the air.

“Uhaha... I was so immersed in my research that I didn't realize a guest had come. It is a shabby place but please come in.”

“.....!”

He had been looking through the door with a hidden camera. How did the Clown notice? His words showed that it wasn't just a gamble.

Tae-hyuk placed the opera mask on his face and entered. He couldn't let it be known that his purpose was Ha-ran. He had to treat her like she was just a decoration in the laboratory.

‘I'm sorry to throw you away, but I will use you one last time Phantom.’

It was impossible to become his old self after he escaped from the

influence of the Demon Revealing Mirror. However, he had spent over half a year as Phantom. He could do this type of acting quite simply.

Tae-hyuk entered the lab naturally, like it was his own home.

“Director Go Ah-tae... no, should I call you the Clown now? It seems like you are doing something very interesting.”

“...This is true. Are you wearing a strange mask?”

“It is like my trademark. That incense also won’t be able to get past this mask.”

“Ohh! No! I know who you are! Unbelievable! Kiik, kikikikik!”

The Clown suddenly started laughing. Then he began to scratch at his face. The nails dug at the burnt skin and it became bloody in an instant.

The Clown continued to laugh while harming himself. Then he said with a grin.

“You! Seo Tae-hyuk! Right?”

“.....!?”



At the moment, Tae-hyuk's heart froze. How do this madman know his identity? It was impossible even for the mafia.

“D-D-Don't tell me! Am I wrong? You clearly have the same smell as my assistant!”

“...Smell?”

Tae-hyuk made a mistake. Even if he used the mask, he normally triggered the Disguise or Transformation skill as well. However, he was only using a minimum of his crime skills now, so he was just wearing the opera mask. Despite all of this, he didn't think he would be discovered through smell.

Tae-hyuk glared at the opponent.

At that moment, the Demon Revealing Mirror sent him a message to tempt him.

[Your identity has been discovered. Kill the opponent to prevent it from being leaked!]

In any other circumstances, he would ignore the message; however, he could do it easily this time. As Tae-hyuk was conflicted, the Clown opened his mouth with an unconcerned expression.

“Well, well, well! A precious guest has come! I don’t have any tea to serve! What should I do, Jung Cho-gyu?”

The Clown seem to ask someone but there was no reply. He started to look around the room with a hand on his forehead. But he couldn’t find the person he was looking for.

“Where, where, where are you? Another cigarette... Kuhehe! Kuhehehehek!”

The Clown’s face distorted with a strange joy.

“Kekekekek! I am talking to you! Jung Cho-gyu, Jung Cho-gyuuuuu! I killed you! Kihehehehehe!”

Tae-hyuk gulped as he looked at the Clown’s actions.

Crazy.

That person was completely crazy.

“...Isn’t that right? Jung Cho-gyu said my research was a failure! Such a person can’t be kept alive!”

It seemed as though he was seeking agreement.

“My great research! There is no chance it will fail. I will

succeed!”

The Clown stomped his feet. It was at that moment. One of the pierrots seemed to slightly recover their minds and spoke,

“D-Director, nim... The Core Drive is really dangerous. Do something wrong... really big accident...”

“Huhhh? Huhhhhhhhh? Did you just say that I failed?”

The Clown’s face distorted with anger thrust a sharp skewer at the pierrot. Blood and flesh splashed as the person collapsed.

“K-Kuwak! Kuaaaak!”

The Clown ignored the screams as he straddled the body and repeated the actions. After less than 10 seconds, the person had died.

“Huh? My research won’t fail! My research is perfect! It is perfect!”

A creepy madness.

Tae-hyuk bit his lip.

A monster was in front of him. Just a week ago, he was a

researcher who wanted to make progress in science, but an ugly monster was born due to an accident.

Tae-hyuk slowly approached the Clown.

“Clown. I know how your research will turn out.”

“What?”

“You will fail.”

The Clown was furious. He rushed towards Tae-hyuk with the iron skewer that he had just used to kill his subordinate.

## Chapter 163 – God Of Crime #5

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“Ah? Ah? Ahh? Failure? Failureeee?! Me? Never! I didn’t fail! Don’t talk such nonsense! It doesn’t matter if you are a guest! Don’t!”

The moment was enormous enough to break down a mountain. However, he was just an old man with a burnt body, and his only weapons were a penknife and an iron skewer. He couldn’t win against Tae-hyuk, who had fought numerous criminals.

“...Machina.”

Tae-hyuk sent a signal and the robotic arm inside his backpack extended, punching the Clown in the face.

Peeok!

“Aaaack!”

The Clown literally flew back and hit the ground. He got up and exclaimed,

“T-This! M-Machina! H-How do you have it?”

“Oh, this? I got a lot of sponsorship and received one. It is easy to clean myself in the bathroom now.”

“Huuuuuuck!”

The Clown moved his gaze and watched Tae-hyuk. The Clown felt instinctively that he couldn't beat the opponent. Tae-hyuk approached the Clown and said,

“You can't win against me even if you mobilize all your people. Killing you here will be the most neat way to end this, but I'm not comfortable with that. I will stun you and take you to the police.”

Tae-hyuk struggled because the Clown knew his identity. But the opponent was completely crazy. Anyway, he was no longer active as Phantom. If he stayed quite than the Clown would just be treated as a madman.

Tae-hyuk deliberately raised the Machine in a threatening manner.

“Clown, this is checkmate.”

Then the Clown commanded the pierrots.

“Hikikikikik! You ignored what I cherished the most! Then! Yesss! This time, I will take your most precious thing... Thing! My cute little pierrots! Seo Ha-ran over there...!”

“...Kuk! T-this bastard!”

Not even one second passed. All sorts of ideas passed through Tae-hyuk's mind. It was the worst situation.

He had purposely talked about something else in order to turn the Clown's attention away from Seo Ha-ran. Was it the wrong choice? Would it have been better to obtain Seo Ha-ran first, even if there was a little risk? If the Clown's command was completed, then Seo Ha-ran would be in danger.

There was only one way to stop it right now. It was to kill the Clown...

N-No. He couldn't become that monster again... Then what about Ha-ran?

“Stop right there, Director Go Ah-tae.”

His accelerated thoughts stopped. Tae-hyuk slowly turned his head and looked at the entrance of the laboratory. There was a man holding a gun.

“...Y-You.”

The Clown was so confused that he shut his mouth before issuing the order to kill Seo Ha-ran.

“Fortunately, it seems like I made it in time. Um, is that Phantom over there?”

“D-Detective Cho Kang-suk!”

Kang-suk narrowed his eyes as he looked around the room. Then he discovered Ha-ran tied up among the pierrots. His eyes trembled for a moment. However, his pistol was still aiming at the Clown.

Kang-suk looked at Tae-hyuk wearing the phantom mask and said,

“I never thought I would meet you here... I was looking for the whereabouts of my missing fiancée. Is it a bingo?”

“...Yes. It is nice timing.”

Kang-suk showed up to save Ha-ran. Tae-hyuk didn't give any hints, but Kang-suk discovered this place. If the Clown didn't give orders, then the pierrots wouldn't do anything. If he did anything even slightly suspicious then Kang-suk would fire his gun.

Tae-hyuk suddenly asked,

“But how did you get here? There were clearly guards.”

“Huh? There was no one?”

“...Detective Cho Kang-suk, your luck is really good.”



“Hahat! I will take it as a compliment. At any rate, Director Go Ah-tae. I will arrest you on charges of kidnapping, etc.”

“Kiik! Kikikik! Me? I will get arrested? I have to complete my research that will bring a new prosperity to mankind!”

Kang-suk sighed loudly and said,

“You might have been that before, but now you are just an ugly criminal.”

“C-C-Criminal? Me?! Criminal?”

The Clown fell into a state of cognitive dissonance and became restless. Kang-suk spoke to Phantom,

“I’m sorry, but it is hard for me to move. Can you help me with the kidnapped woman over there? I will definitely pay it back. Well, my actions might be a little bit illegal.”

Kang-suk seemed to perfectly think that Tae-hyuk was Phantom. Tae-hyuk nodded and went over to Ha-ran. The pierrots didn’t receive any orders so they just gave a low moan. Ha-ran was tied up but he couldn’t see any . It seemed like she had taken something similar to a sleeping pill.

He shook her body a few times before she started blinking.

“How you regained consciousness?”

“...T-Tae-hyuk.”

Tae-hyuk said with panic.

“I am Phantom. I’m sorry but I think you mistook me for someone else.”

“H-Huh... No matter the situation, do you think I wouldn’t recognize you, even if you were wearing a mask? Oh, t-this place is dangerous! Get away from here quickly!”

“...We’ll talk more later. Just stay still for a moment. It is hard to untie you.”

Tae-hyuk would worry about what to tell Ha-ran after successfully rescuing her. But first, they had to get out of here. Kang-suk, who was confronting the Clown, shouted with a loud voice,

“D-Director Go Ah-tae, don’t run away!”

Suddenly, the Clown started running towards the Core Drive in the centre of the lab. The confused Kang-suk pulled the trigger of his gun.

Tang!

“Cough!”

If a culprit was trying to escape then the first place to shoot was the legs. The Clown ignored the blood dripping down his legs and headed into the Core Drive. It happened so quickly that Kang-suk couldn't respond properly. The Clown manipulated a panel and triggered something.

Kuooooong!

“What? What are you doing?”

The inside of the Core Drive turned red. The plasma started to rotate around around the Clown's body.

“Kiik! Kikikikikik! Kuhahahaha! I have activated the Core Drive! I will prove to everyone that my research hasn't failed! Now from here! The human race! It will be a step towards evolution!”

The Clown danced with joy behind the tank made of tempered glass. The situation inside the Core Drive wasn't clear so Kang-suk fired at the Clown.

“Stop what you are doing and get out of there! Damn! It is tempered glass!”

Tae-hyuk was also confused.

[Caution!]

-The Spying skill has detected a danger.

-The special ability has been triggered and 20 affinity points have been reduced.

-Amount of time remaining until the Core Drive explodes—.

-00:10:09’

Core Drive explosion? Then what about the Psychotropic Incense? No, what big explosion?

There was no doubt that it would be dangerous.

“Detective Cho Kang-suk! Drag that clown out! He wants to blow this place up!”

Kang-suk made a horrified expression.

“Damn! I can’t die along with that bastard!”

Tae-hyuk took Ha-ran to the entrance of the laboratory and gave her the route to get out of here. Then he ran to the Clown and asked,

“Clown! What will happen if the Core Drive explodes?”

“Kikikik! That is impossible! My research was a success! Just stay there and watch the birth of the best invention in human history!”

Tae-hyuk bit his lip and muttered,

“Tell me just in case.”

“Kuk, kukuk. The Core Drive is an antimatter that generates infinite energy. If it explodes, then it will have the energy of one or two hydrogen bombs.”

“...You were studying such a dangerous thing here?”

“Don’t worry! My research! Definitely! It is successful!”

It was dangerous. This place was dangerous. This was why the study was frozen.

“Damn! I will make you stop this!”

“St-op? Stop? Stop?! I won’t do it! I won’t let anyone interfere

with my research! Kuhahat! Kuhahahat! The Core Drive is a success! It is successful!”

“.....”

Kang-suk’s face turned pale as he heard the story from the side.

“Phantom... Is that really what Director Go Ah-tae said?”

“...It seems so.”

“Damn! I will call reinforcements right now!”

“There are only 10 minutes left. We have no choice but to resolve this by ourselves.”

“...I don’t know how much damage the blast will cause. Can we stop the bomb? Damn... Turn off that machine right now! Or else I will kill you!”

The Clown ignored Kang-suk’s desperate words and declared triumphantly.

“Kukuk... It seems like this is the only thing I can do to prevent the Core Drive from being stopped.”

The Clown closed his eyes and stabbed his chest with the iron

skewer. The Clown laughed even when he was dying.

“My research is definitely a success! A success! Su...”

It was a pointless death. Kang-suk's eyes filled with despair. He sat on the floor and knocked against the tempered glass with a bitter face.

“Damn... Dying like this...”

“D-Detective Cho Kang-suk. I will try it.”

“P-Phantom...?”

“I am Phantom. Turning this machine off is simple.”

“Can I believe you?”

“I told you. If you go outside, then Seo Ha-ran will be waiting. Get her out of here.”

Kang-suk nodded slowly with a firm expression. Phantom was a criminal, but he didn't seem the type to lie. Once Kang-suk left, Phantom... No, Seo Tae-hyuk muttered in a small voice.

“Now, what can I do?”

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Fortunately, he sent Kang-suk and Ha-ran out of here, but the problem was from now on. If he didn't stop the Core Drive then serious damage might occur. If he didn't have any luck then the Psychotropic Incense might leak outside the lab. Then it would literally be like a zombie movie.

Tae-hyuk first collected the remaining Psychotropic Incense left in the institute and gave it to the pierrots.

Then he said,

“Get out of here right now. Head to the nearest hospital.”

“Un-der-stood.”

The pierrots started to move according to the orders that Tae-hyuk gave. Thus, Tae-hyuk was left alone in the laboratory.

“If I use the Machine then I can break through that tempered glass. However, if I install a bomb...”

As Tae-hyuk was in distress, someone approached him. Tae-hyuk looked at them with confusion.

“What, you went outside... N-Noona?”



A smiling Seo Ha-ran was standing there. She said to him,

“It is a dangerous situation... Is there no time to explain it again?”

“.....”

“I couldn’t move my body, but my mind was fine the whole time. I heard the entire conversation between Tae-hyuk and Go Ah-tae.”

“N-Noona...”

“Don’t worry. I absolutely won’t tell the ‘truth’ to anyone. No, it will be fine.”

Ha-ran smiled and reached out to Tae-hyuk.

“Noona. Do you have anything to break that tank and stop the equipment?”

“.....”

“Don’t look like that. Noona...it will be okay. I’m not scared at all. I mean, I’ll do it. Sister will stop it.”

Tae-hyuk’s eyes flashed. She was saying that she would sacrifice herself with such a pure expression.

Ah, yes... He had seen this look before.

-From now on, I will be your mother and father.

Ever since then, Ha-ran had sacrificed herself for them. Tae-hyuk hesitated for a moment.

“...Noona. I’m sorry.”

“There is need to be sorry! I’m doing this because I like it.”

Pushuk!

Tae-hyuk sprinkled some of the Psychotropic Incense in Ha-ran’s face. Her eyes instantly relaxed and she became a puppet who would listen to anything Tae-hyuk said.

“Run away from here. And together with Cho Kang-suk...”

He paused for a moment and looked at Ha-ran’s face. Yes, he came here because he wanted to see a smile on her face.

Tae-hyuk smiled. Finally, he ordered Ha-ran.

“...Live happily for a long time.”

“Un-der-stood... Ah, no, T-Tae-hyuk...”

Despite being affected by the Psychotropic Incense, she called out the name of her brother until the end. But she couldn't disobey the command and left the laboratory.

Tae-hyuk sighed. There were only four minutes remaining. What was the condition for upgrading to the 'God of Crime'?

Acquiring one million affinity points. Maybe the Core Drive exploding would emit a bigger energy than he imagined? Yes, there were one million people in the city.

The condition for acquiring affinity points. Changing someone's fate. Killing a person who should've lived, or saving a person who should've died. Maybe the God of Crime was...

Tae-hyuk couldn't help sighing.

He wasn't afraid. He had been destined to die from the death penalty anyway. He had returned to the past to create a new relationship and to change his sister's despairing face into a smile.

Yes, this was enough. He was satisfied.

Tae-hyuk slowly muttered as he watched the Clown lying on the floor.

"The crime skills. The evil that exists in the world is gathered

and given shape. If a person's mind is weak then they will get corrupted by it.”

The numerous criminals that he met popped into his head. He had learnt their abilities in the form of the crime skills.

“Pickpockets, scammers, kidnappers, murderers, thieves, gangs and the mafia. Their malice gathered and a monster was born. But... Humans who will sacrifice themselves for others exist.”

Seo Ha-ran devoted everything to her brothers. Song Hye-mi and Cho Kang-suk as well...

The world wasn't simply filled with malice.

He slowly raised his head. It was different from the future, where he was falsely charged. From now on, he would change the fates of one million people. Of course, among them...

Tae-hyuk laughed.

Sacrificing himself for somebody else? He wasn't such a great person. He used to be on death row. Now, he was a criminal who committed numerous crimes.

So...

“At best, I am just trying to be the God of Crime.”

# Chapter 164 – 10 Year Later (End)

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The situation was literally appalling.

It had been one hour since gunmen had stormed the bank. The plan was perfect.

Epsilon hacked the police lines to buy them time while Alpha, Beta, and Gamma collected the money. The time required to do all of that was around 300 seconds. Delta was waiting outside with the van for their escape.

Of course, Alpha wasn't foolish enough to flee with the same car. Every time they moved a certain distance, they would change the car. This way, they could run away without leaving a clue.

The plan was perfect from the beginning to the end. Then why was the situation like this?

However, it was too late to feel regret, as the water had already spilled. Alpha shouted in an irritated voice,

“What are you doing? Be sure to keep the hostages! Those bastards are our lifeline!”

Beta's face distorted as he held a gun to the hostages.

“You do it if you have a complaint! What? A perfect plan? This?

Huh? If you have something to say, then tell me!”

Alpha was dumbfounded. Alpha was just the leader this time. Beta had more experience and skills than Alpha. No, it was a big hit that Beta joined the team in the first place. He was a former mafia veteran who could handle skills.

Then Gamma, who hadn't been seen for a while, approached.

“Hyung-nim. Why are you fighting all of a sudden? The situation might have changed but aren't we allies? Smile instead of looking like you are chewing shit.”

Gamma said with a bright expression. The impatient Alpha exploded.

“T-This bastard! What are you saying? Don't you know why the situation is like this?”

“Isn't it because your leadership wasn't good?”

Alpha couldn't endure it anymore and swung his fists at Gamma.

“Come on, Alpha. We are allies until the end of the operation.”

“Just...! Fuck! This happened due to that monkey-like bastard!”

“Gamma is also a team member. Forget it. First, let’s think about getting out of here.”

“Okay, I understand. Damn...”

There were only three members here, including Alpha. Somehow, they had to overcome this crisis with their own strength. Alpha glared at the grinning Gamma. He was a complete bastard.

He had been put on the team as a penetration expert. He was excellent at picking locks and disabling security. But that wasn’t the problem.

“That Satan-level bastard...”

Gamma had made a mistake. He accidentally caused the alarm to ring. He tried to leave the bank, leaving the money bag in the safe. It was literally an internal enemy. In the end, their plan to rob and escape the bank had failed. Now they were holding the customers hostage and were demanding a helicopter to escape.

Gamma rubbed his palms together and said,

“Beta hyung-nim, please rest! I will manage the hostages!”

“Shit! Once this is finished, I will kill the the broker who introduced me to that bastard!”

Beta gestured to the agitated Alpha and went to a corner to start talking to the hostages. He told Gamma to keep an eye on the hostages.

“First of all, calm down and listen. I don’t like it but in order to leave here, we have to show a strong appearance. If the police don’t listen to our demands then one by one, the hostages...”

As Alpha and Beta were talking in secret, a familiar voice was heard.

“Uh, are you going to kill the hostages now? Then I don’t have time to play around.”

They turned their heads and saw the smiling Gamma.

“Hey, you should be watching the hostages...uaack!”

So far, Gamma had always been moving like a sloth, but now he moved at a fast pace. Gamma caused Alpha to trip and then fell on Beta’s back. Then he twisted Beta’s arm and forced him to the ground.

“W-What? This bastard!”

Beta shrieked. His arms were covered with silver handcuffs. Alpha’s expression was shocked.



No way, that bastard...!

Gamma said with a smile.

“Hyung-nim, thank you for your performance this month. I am Detective Seo Tae-hyuk from the Gangdong Police Station. Kim Dong-soo and Bae Sung-jun, I am arresting you for special robbery and the illegal trafficking of guns. You have the right to remain silent...”

“Aaaaack! Son of a bitch! How dare you deceive us! This scammer! Do you know who I am?”

Detective Seo Tae-hyuk laughed at the agitated Kim Dong-soo.

“Huh? I don’t care about who you are. Rather, shouldn’t you be wondering about where you will be going? You won’t be able to leave for at least three years.”

“Aaaaack!”

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“Detective-nim! I arrested Delta, who was hacking the security network, and Epsilon, who was in the car. They really were where Detective-nim said they were.”

“Really? You went through a lot of trouble.”

“However, it has only been a short while since Detective-nim entered. You already solved so many big cases... What is your secret?”

“Well, a burning sense of justice?”

The cops laughed at Seo Tae-hyuk’s joke. Tae-hyuk took off the coat that he was wearing. Then he muttered in a small voice so that no one else could hear.

“It seems like I am finishing up the blacklist.”

The reason he was able to catch so many criminals during a short period of time after becoming a detective was simple. It was because he knew. It was a secret that Seo Tae-hyuk couldn’t tell anyone.

He knew the future for the next four years. Most of it was about criminals, but there were many changes due to the butterfly effect. But they were golden memories for a detective.

He thought about the moment 10 years ago when he decided to become a detective.

‘Crime skills... Now that I think about it, that really was a dreamlike year.’

He remembered the last crime skill that he got.

‘Wasn’t it the Proxy Attendance skill?’

He thought it was a useless skill when he first got it. 10 years ago, Tae-hyuk was left alone in the Wolsang Institute to stop the Clown’s Core Drive.

He was reminded of the newly learned crime skill as he was talking. Then he decided to find out what type of power it was. It was a skill to create an ‘agent’ to do something on behalf of the caster.

‘In order to be used as an intermediary, I had to offer an object of equal value. And I...’

He offered up the crime skills as the sacrifice. An alter ego was created to destroy the Core Drive. The thing that appeared was a ghoulish face. There was a hollow space where the eyes were and the mouth was ripped from ear to ear.

It said to Tae-hyuk.

–Don’t think this is over. As long as human evil remains in the world, someone will become the God of Crime again.

Ah, was that so? Then he woke up on the bed in his own house.

As he thought back to his high school days, Seo Tae-hyuk suddenly heard a loud noise in his ears. Two people who seemed to be security guards were in front of the bank.

“Oh, Boss-nim is coming, but who blocked the entrance with this car? It looks expensive so I can’t remove it.”

“Wah! Sunbae! This car is a Lamborghini Aventador!”

Do you know the car?”

“Of course! It is the most expensive model among the Lamborghinis, a man’s romance!”

“...H-How much is it?”

“This has all the options. Is it around 700~800 million won?”

“Wah...that is at the level of a house I would need to be reincarnated three times in order to buy it, Who the hell would be riding this type of car?”

“Maybe it is a chaebol or a celebrity? At any rate, it isn’t for people like us...”

Tae-hyuk scratched his head and approached the guards.

“Oh, that is mine. I had business so I parked it in front of the bank for a moment...I’ll take it away right now.”

The guards stared at Tae-yuk’s face and they started to exchange glances. It seemed like there was a strange misconception so Tae-hyuk coughed a few times and pulled out his identification.

“I am Seo Tae-hyuk from the Gangdong Police Station.”

Then the senior guard said with wide eyes,

“D-Detective-nim! Ah, I’m really sorry. I had a weird misconception...”

“Haha, it is okay. Please do your best.”

Tae-hyuk bowed, took the key out of his pocket and entered his car.

“Wow, it really is his.”

“Oh my god. I thought he was a delinquent instead of a detective at first. But to think he would be driving an expensive car...”

“Hey! I told you not to evaluate people based on appearance.”

“I-I will keep that in mind.”

As he parked his car elsewhere, a person called him.

–Ah, Tae-hyuk! What happened to the case?

“Ah? Kang-suk hyung. Of course, no civilians got hurt. The culprits were arrested.”

–Wow! This brat. You work so hard every day. Why are you leaving work when the chief needs to stay behind and work overtime? Isn't this a fully developed police station?

A smile appeared on Tae-hyuk's face.

Cho Kang-suk became a pot-bellied uncle and was now in a much higher position than before. But he was still the same.

–Ah right, don't you have a date today? Let me meet them next time. I wonder who it is. How pretty is she that you would hide her from me?

“Um... It is someone that Hyung knows.”

–R-really? Now I am even more curious! I will have someone investigate this!

“Wah... Isn’t that an abuse of power?”

–Then let me meet them! Sheesh. At any rate, you can leave now. Just make sure to submit the report tomorrow.

“I understand, Superintendent Cho Kang-suk.”

-...You are giving me goose bumps.

Tae-hyuk hung up and laughed. There were still a few people remaining on the blacklist. He still had a lot of cases after that, but it wasn’t a problem.

He had experience as the God of Crime, tangling himself up with numerous criminals. Everyday was a fight against the new God of Crime that would someday reappear... If there was just one small problem—.

Tae-hyuk bumped into a woman dressed in a suit.

“Ah, I’m sorry.”

“It’s nothing, it was probably because I wasn’t looking.”

Tae-hyuk nodded and suddenly got an ominous feeling.

‘Wait a minute, don’t tell me...’

He placed his hands in his pockets to check if they contained something. He touched a piece of soft cloth. It was probably...

‘...Damn, I stole it again! A detective is going to be arrested!’

Tae-hyuk silently screamed as the woman passed by him. Fortunately, it seemed like she hadn’t noticed that something had been stolen.

Yes, it occasionally happened. Why did he keep stealing things whenever he bumped into another person?

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Extra Notes:

God of Crime is officially complete!!!

This is the last chapter because I joined the prologue and chapter one.

A huge, huge thank you to my editor Superposhposh, who was a superstar and managed to edit all the chapters of GOC. I was surprised that he didn’t call me crazy and is still willing to work with me =). Thank you to the readers for following this work until the end. For all the patrons who donated, I truly appreciate all of it.

I hope to see you all on my next two works, which will be



releasing sometime next week.

Enjoy and thank you again~

- Rainbow Turtle